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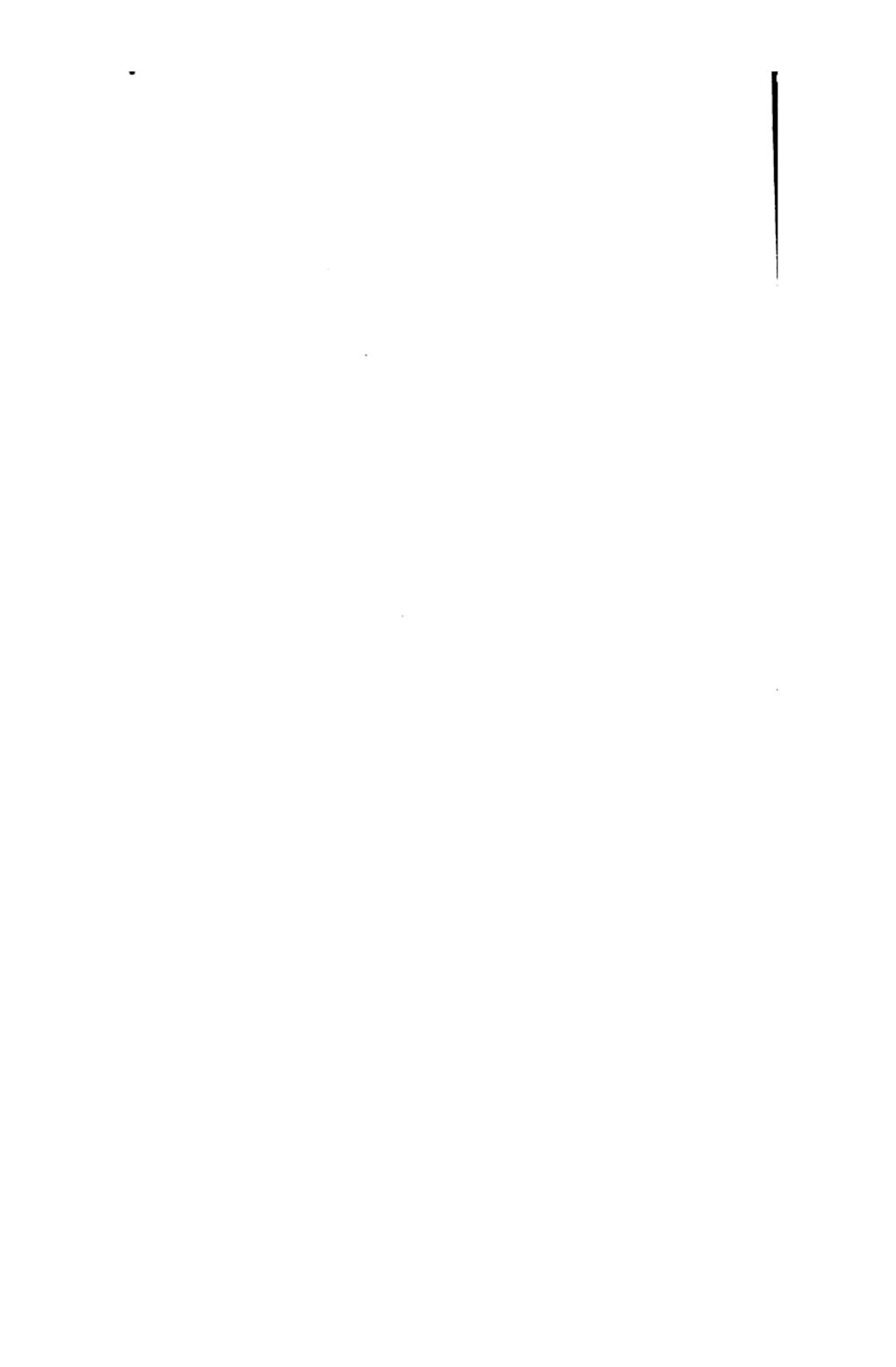


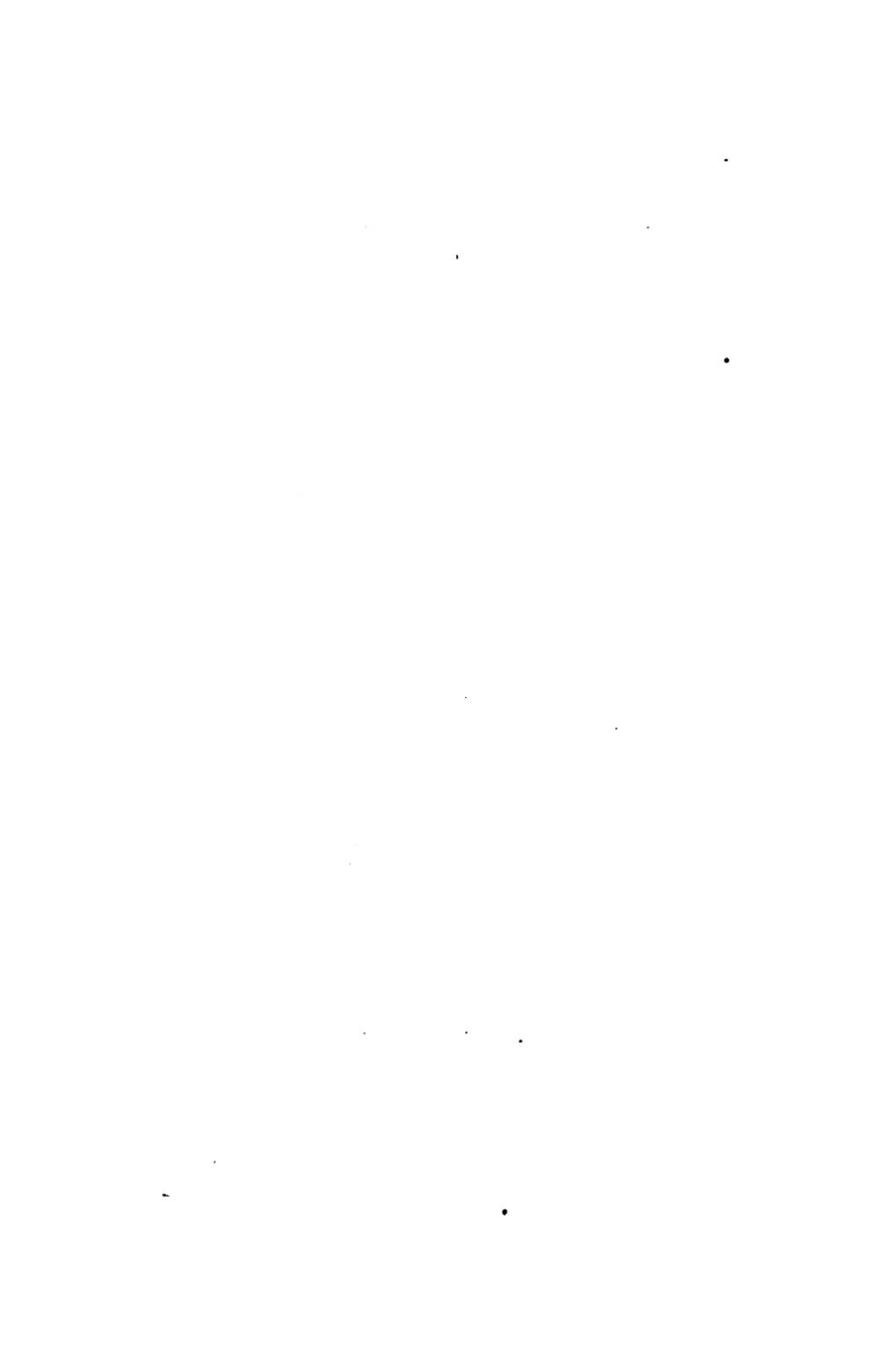
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fatal Year 1720, to the Year 1748.

Written by Mrs. RICHWOULD, ^{else}
One of the most interested Parties.

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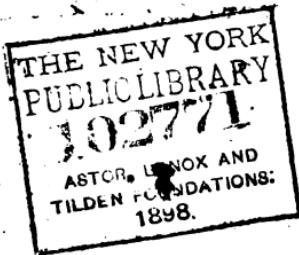
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MARY WOOD

COLLECTOR



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OF THE
First VOLUME.

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*OLD MRS. CHATSWELL. A Story of
the Lancashire Peasants. In two vols.*

THE
South Sea Fortune,
OR,
Chaplain in the Saddle.

C H A P. I.

The author's design in the work. Account of her father's family. Her sister Letitia's lover. South Sea scheme. Mr. Sm—ell sets out for London to get money. Purposes a new way of living.

I HAD but little thought, further than my own satisfaction, from the following hints at the times of my collecting and penning them down ; as that they might cause me an agreeable amusement upon the future perusal ; but little did I expect, they would ever need to be produced

ced by me, as exemplars, for the future steerage of my own conduct by, upon any emergencies that might present to myself during my voyage through the tempestuous ocean of this life: But I have since had the best of grounds for assuring myself, that however placid all the elements may prove at our first embarking, and how delightfully soever we may sail at our first outset, under the view of a prosperous passage; yet such numberless events may arise to thwart our expectations and purposes; and those, from such a variety of causes too, obscured from our intellects in the womb of fate till their immediate production; as we, being noways capable of diverting by our policy or foresight, should rather than submit ourselves to be over-borne by, arm ourselves, with resolution to encounter, under such serenity, as that they may gain the less advantage over us.

Now, as every one is not prepared from nature to advance even to the teeth of difficulties unmoved, or to bear up under unavoidable disappointments, without a wrinkle upon their brow, or a distortion of their disposition or behaviour: So no motive acts so forcibly to that desirable end, as the placing before our eyes the examples of such as have stemmed the torrent before us

as with equanimity ; in whose actions and deportment, as in a mirror, we may behold scenes worthy our closest imitation ; these operating upon our intellects by more sensible impressions than the most profound doctrines by word of mouth ; though introduced by every the most exquisite flourishes of rhetoric and elocution.

It is usual with most men to form their notions of what will be agreeable, useful, or entertaining to others, from the effect things have upon themselves ; which has been the most prevailing motive with me, for digesting my rude memorandums into the form they will in the sequel appear in ; though from my recollection, I have interlarded in my history, accounts of several persons, transactions, and things, which had forever slept in obscurity, had they not served some way necessary, either to the introduction or elucidation of some part or other of my main design, which is to establish the character of Mrs. Wrothless, from thence the adverse and fortunate occurrences of her life, and the manner wherein she supported under them.

Let not my reader imagine me in the least partial in the following account, or that I have exaggerated beyond the verity of the facts represented, from the relation-

ship that Mrs. Wrothless bears to me, as her own junior sister; for had fable been the view I had sat out with, how easily might I have applied many parts of the following transactions to myself, and have set them to the tune of my own commendation: But I must acknowledge, that if any thing shall escape me towards the latter part of life, worthy of the least praise from my reader, it was solely owing to my sister's example, which I vainly strove to imitate, to the full extent of my power; but how far I have proved deficient in my aims, let the candid reader judge for me.

I shall only, in the last place, before I set about the task I have enjoined myself, beg leave to bespeak my readers compassion, rather than his contempt, for whatever errors he may find in the undertaking itself; my sex, though capable in some measure of judging, being far less prepared for the execution of great designs, than the other, to whose province the prosecution of similar labours is usually confined. Under the prospect therefore of the world's natural indulgence to my sex, I presume to begin with my father, who, as the head of our little domestic commonwealth, giving life and motion to all the subordinates of our community, by an over-anxiousness

anxiousness for an immensity of riches; from a family of exquisite harmony and tranquility, reduced us to a state of anarchy and desolation.

My father, Mr. William Sm—ell, was a gentleman of a handsome estate in Gloucestershire; kept his coach and four, with about seven servants; but had no other children than myself and my sister Letitia, afterwards the wife of Samuel Wrothless, esq; nor was there the least likelihood of his having others, especially by my mother, who had ceased bearing for at least fifteen years before the time I am speaking of, which was in the year 720; my sister being then twenty-three years of age, and myself turned of twenty-one: So that we had for some time been esteemed in the country, as young ladies of handsome fortunes; had kept the very best of company, and had run through every the polite accomplishments for the qualification of ladies who were designed to no mean figure in life. We had each received offers for marriage more than once; but these had been put off, though my sister had still a suitor, whom she could noways be discharged from, but some such rudeness in her behaviour to him, as it was not in her nature to consent to;

to ; though both herself and my father had more than once assured him, that his visits to her would be fruitless, she being determined not to marry as yet, and when she should be so disposed, that she would not admit of him for an husband.

Mr. Wrothleſs, for that was the gentleman's name, had certainly a vast veneration for my sister ; but then so many impediments interposed to his nuptials with her, as were not to be surmounted.

Mr. Wrothleſs's estate was a good nine thousand pounds a year, and was so well wooded, that I have heard it infiſted, the taking twenty thousand pounds worth of timber therefrom, would turn to its improvement, by making way for a fine thriving under crop, that must be over-shadowed and choaked by its standing.

Besides this, Mr. Wrothleſs had as elegant a modern built seat as any within many miles of it, and this, surrounded by a well stocked and planted park ; nor, in short, was any external satisfaction wanting, for the gratification of the most ambitious of womankind, who would but content herself with grandeur, and magnificence alone ; but then, she must place no part of her gratification in the man himself : for, though scarce thirty years of age,

by

by computation of the time from his birth, he was so far worn down with debility, as not only to be rendered less active, but far more infirm than a temperate man at sixty.

His face was a congeries of carbuncles, nodes, pustles, and party-coloured pimples. His eyes, as red as those of a ferret; his hand, scarce capable of conveying his glass to his head; and yet, his bottle, to which the above horrid spectacle was owing, he still retaining as his bosom companion, what prospect must that lady have before her, who should surrender her charms to the embraces of so debased a creature!

These were some of the reasons that induced my sister to fly so unproportionate a match; though my father, solicitous after money, would have persuaded her how such a widow a very few years must make her, when she would be a match for a peer of the kingdom; and fain would he have contributed to its success, but that my mamma opposed it, tooth and nail, nor would she ever consent, she said, that her child, upon any pecuniary consideration, should be so humbled, as to bed with so putrid a carcase.

While matters relative to my sister's marriage were thus at a stand, one or two of my father's old acquaintance, who then just arrived from London, calling in upon him, they informed him over a glass of wine, what great matters were transacting in town by the south sea company ; who having obtained some extraordinary liberties, were to turn all things into gold. That their stock had risen past all belief, and that all the world was subscribing their properties into their books, as the most undoubted means of immense riches.

This sound so tickled my father's ears, who himself had several thousand pounds of their stock already, that he would almost have been rude enough to have turned out his company with his own hands, for the sake of that privacy he now coveted, for indulging over this new money-getting scheme ; but night approaching, his visitors discharged him soon of the burden their society proved to him, by calling for their horses, and taking their leave of him.

My father was so impatient for fathoming the very foundation of the report, as to give orders for all things preparatory for his undertaking the journey next morning ; nor slept he a wink all night, for

for the many projects his head was replete with, formed upon the conjectural apprehensions of things, as they might appear to him upon his arrival at London.

He let my mamma into the motive of his journey, after informing her of all that had that afternoon been reported to him; and calculated to her what his stocks would be worth, at the current price of three hundred and fifty pounds, which his friends had assured him they sold for at their leaving London three days before, and that they were then rising: So that though he had made it apparent to her, how immensely rich he already was; yet all thoughts that were immersed, in the profundity of his growing expectations, and he had already declared, that he would hourly watch the fluctuations of the stock, that he might take his market of them, at the very moment of their advancement; which, as would be dangerous trusting to any other's management, he would execute in person upon the spot.

My mamma, from the calculations he had made of the advanced value of the stock, finding it of a sudden almost quadrupled, would have persuaded my father to have sent up an order for the sale of it; judging his then present gain a sufficiency

for every his purposes in life, as also for the advancement of his children ; but he had wound himself up to such a supreme pitch of imaginary grandeur, as nothing less than the completion of his projected supplies would support.

My mamma, observing him to be so impatient for the return of morning, that he might be upon the wing to London, was fearful, that the eagerness he would pursue his journey with, might overheat his blood, and possibly cast him into a fever ; so that she would fain have prevailed for his going in the chariot ; which, tho' a more leisurely, would still, she said, be a more safe conveyance for him. But what ? Did she think, he said, that he would be retarded in his passage by four aged cattle, that he had already been for some time ashamed of ? Beasts, that he could promise her, at his return, he should consign over solely to the plough : For that he intended to purchase him, not only a full set of new ones, but a far superior equipage to his present, in every other degree.

Having thus kept my mamma waking for the whole night, he started up at the very first peep of day break, and after a careless salute, as she lay, for he would not

not suffer her to rise, lest she should by any means retard his progress; having mounted his horse, he turned his back upon his family, for the pursuit of more exalted gratifications, than any that could yield him.

C H A P. II.

The author's sentiments of her father's journey. Miss Letitia's reproof, and opinion. Molly's displeasure at it. Mrs. Sm—ell tells them the reason of their father's journey. Thoughts of the rise of stocks. Pride increases as money advances. Miss Letitia's moderation. Intollerable to Polly. The sister's estimate of riches.

MY sister and I, had been little less watchful all the foregoing night than our papa and mamma; though not from the same motives; for the sudden resolution he had taken for his journey so early the next morning, without the least previous hint to either of us of a cause for it, set my imagination to work with such

propensity, for the assignment of some reason for the proceeding ; that having so large a field before me for expatiating in, scarce an argument, inductive of such a vigorous conclusion, could have been offered, but I had, in one shape or other, dipped into ; but still, without being able to produce any one incitement, that seemed to incline our assent to it, preferable to the numberless others that I had started. For my part, I expressed myself under such vexation at my father's leaving us ignorant, in an affair of such seeming importance, that I could not refrain from displaying my talents to his condemnation.

Methinks ! sister, said I, since there are no more of us than you and I, and we being now women grown too, who have a joint interest in all my father's concerns ; it seems somewhat ungenerous in him, not to afford us farther lights into his affairs, than he is accustomed to. Are not we (does he imagine) equally to be affected with himself, in both the prosperous and mischievous occurrences of his circumstances ? Are not we to rise, or fall, by his credit and reputation in the world, whether it proves good or bad ? Is it not his fortune that we must run in life, and our advancement, or depression, be governed by

by it? Then why should any man have secrets, to be reserved from the knowledge of his own children; and why his transactions should not be made as apparent to them, as to his wife, I am not furnished with the least pertinent cause whatever?

Nay, added I, in cases of difficulty, how often happens it, that a junior penetrates farther into a matter than his senior? at least, one head may hit off that, in instant, which another may crack its raps about for a long time to but very little purpose. I say therefore, added I; what my father is now upon, must either be, or not be, of importance; if not, why is it made a secret of? If it is, why were we not consulted about it? would it be for no other end, it would yet shew danger, if likely to prove noxious to us, and thereby set our brains at work to resent it; or if it bears an aspect of favour to us, why may we not be prepared grateful returns for it? For my part, said I, was I to have an husband so disposed to taciturnity, I shall soon make him speak his tongue, or pull the house about ears, with a vengeance. — I hate to be esteemed as an useless piece of lumber in the house, only to fill up a vacant corner. It makes a mere fool of me.

Though

Though my sister Letitia had been as curious as myself, in inventing occasions for the so speedy march of my father; yet, when she found me begin to inveigh against him so bitterly for his silence towards us, she could no longer suffer it without reproof.

Molly, said she to me; your zeal for duly supporting the cause you have engaged in, destroys even your cause itself. Invectives against a parent are in no case becoming; nay, are so scandalous, as by diminishing the credit of the party in my esteem, to prejudice me against the whole validity of his argument.

The case before us is our parents, who may transact it as he pleases, exclusive of us, to whom he is noways accountable for the well or ill conducting of it: for that the most you can urge in favour of your tenet is, that you may be possibly affected by the consequences of the affair my father is gone upon; but, supposing this to be so, is he not at liberty to pursue his own measures, in an affair that must necessarily, from the eagerness of the prosecution of it, relate to himself primarily, and but eventually to either of us?

I am as pleased with fresh intelligences as another; but why should I condemn another

mother for not burdening me with his secrets? Had the affair my father is gone upon principally concerned us, we had certainly received prior information of it; but if it peculiarly concerns himself, and but contingently us, it may be soon enough for us to be acquainted with it, whenever the exigency shall happen; and for my own part, if I never hear it, I shall presume it related not to me, or was improper for my ears; in which cases, my ignorance will be beneficial to me: as on the other hand, should it prove a matter any ways of utility to me, I shall not fail being advised of it, and shall receive it with all gratitude & duty, whenever he shall please to reveal it to me.

I must own, added my sister, that was a thing withheld from my knowledge, at I should but suspect to concern me as a woman, and that a christian woman too; no one would be more anxious than myself for a discovery of it: since I should not be my very being to be compleat, till I were conscious of all its appendages, and every office that was required of me, either relative to my Maker, myself, or my fellow-creature; but as to all temporary advantages in life, as the reporter may equally receive me, to my benefit, or prejudice, at his

his pleasure ; so I shall never concern myself farther therein, than by acting to the best of my reason and discretion, from what I shall hear, whether truth or falsehood shall be related to me : for it is full time enough for me to consider my proceedings after notice of the fact, which, till then, is to me, as if no such thing had happened.

I was never more out of patience in my life, than at this indolent behaviour of my sister's ; and so I called it to her ; though she made but light of my censure, assuring me, that he who would intrude into other folks affairs, must have more business upon his hands than she should ever hope to be mistress of.

I was full fraught, in my own imagination, with matter sufficient for her conviction, all which, I should not have scrupled to have bestowed upon her to that end, had not we been summoned to other exercise, by my mamma's woman, who then entering our chamber, informed us, that her lady waited breakfast for us, and desired us to come down directly.

We found my mamma over head and ears in the vapours for the loss of my father, under the uncertainty, she then told us she was of the time of his return, but this,

this, my sister and I strove all in our powers to divert her from, by numberless little measurable artifices; till by the time that breakfast was about half over, we thought her to be pretty cheary.

I had waited for some time, in expectation that my sister (as most of our discourse ran upon my father's want of sleep, his rising, and outset upon his journey) would have began upon the question of what had so unexpectedly called my father to London, and that upon so short a warning too; but finding not the least propensity in her for such a motion, I took up myself, to first, hope, I was noways improper in my demand, and then to inquire into the cause of it.

My mamma replied, that as Mr. Smell had always been active in every undertaking that made but a shew for the advancement of his family; so purely, for our uses, more than her's or his own, having had of an incredible rise in the funds, wherein most of his spare cash was secured, that they were still proceeding to an equal value; in order to make the most of the advantage of the market he had determined, rather to transact his own affairs himself in person, than commit them to a Broker; who under his

his order, might profit himself many hundreds in a few hours, and think to satisfy him, with whatever price he should put upon his stock, though the intrinsick value might be abundantly more in his favour.

As to the matter of stocks and funds, we had so little notion of what either meant, that Greek, or Hebrew, had been to the full as intelligible to either of us ; only this we believed, that it was some method amongst mankind, for disposing of money to an annual profit ; having learnt so much, from my father's frequent discourse of receiving his dividends.

My sister therefore, now we were so fairly launched into the busines, desired to know what my mamma meant by the prodigious rising she had mentioned of the stock ; nor could I, for my life, but imagine, till my mamma by her answer explained it to us, that some great mass of money laid together, must, upon some peculiar application to it, have swelled into a more extraordinary bulk than usual, like our dough before the fire ; by which means, each man's proportion was grown the larger ; but my mamma, indeed, explained to us the rising, to signify no more, than that each man's hundred, or thousand pounds in that stock, was increased in value

due to two, or three hundred, or thousand ; and with this, as it must certainly increase our fortunes, I rested satisfied ; though how one hundred should in so short a space beget its like, or even a number of them, I was as much in the dark as ever ; nor upon inquiry, could my mamma, as I then found, afford me any farther aid at my hinge, than that it was so.

My mamma then exposing to us the calculations that my father had apprized of ; first, of the original, and then of the present value of his stock ; I immediately halved it as well as I could, and the next day, I forthwith applied to myself ; and swelling in the esteem I had of my own perfections, in proportion to my expected fortune, I really began to think, that not one of the young fellows, whose lottery I had often coveted, could form any such pretensions to me.

We retreated soon after breakfast to our chamber, to dress against dinner-time ; my brains were so full of the advancement of my fortune, that after several fittings of my apparel, I could pitch upon nothing more becoming gown and petticoat, that I could fit for my wear.

I began with one suit of pinners ; exchanged it immediately for another, and this

this for a third: I dressed and undressed so long, till my sister, who had been ready for some time before in her dressing-room, and had been reading Milton, coming out to me, was surprized, she said, that I was no forwarder yet.

I was under equal consternation at her stupidity, (as I called it) as she was, she said, at my inattention to the business that had brought me thither, and told her, how amazed I was at the little spirits she seemed to possess, after the short history her mamma had given us of the intent of my father's journey. Why? my dear, said I, you look as unconcerned, as if the accumulating of wealth by my father, was a matter of no consequence to you; when believe me, I view it in quite another light: For to whom must it all come at last but to us two? And if so, let me tell you, there will scarce be two better fortunes within some counties of us.

' Bless me! child, said my sister; of what great signification can it be to us, whether our fortunes are twenty, or forty thousand pounds apiece; since the former will support us above want, as well as the latter, and probably abridge us of many extravagances, which this may but invite us into. Besides, a farther inconvenience we may be

be subjected by this to, of being marked out for the prey of a spendthrift, as the ready means of recovering his sinking fortune, by supporting him in his vices for me few years longer, than otherwise he could have been able to have stood his ground.

I could have stabbed her, I'll vow, for her folly: its pity, Lettice, said I, that fortune should bestow her favours upon any one who flings them like yourself! if she would answer to my call, what would I give? said I. Nay, what would not do to invite her to me? O! the sensible soul! that possesses you, child, added I, make twenty, or forty thousand pounds equal to you! O! if I could but prevail with fortune for a million of money, I could venture any man's making a tool of you! its all extasy in the reflection! O, no, I'd make the men dance attendance upon me, and lick the very dirt I dé on, before I would submit to be tickled by any of them; not but that I could have my favourite he, too; and that possibly consent to marriage with him, but then, I would reserve so much my fortune under my own management, not only never to want the least delight in myself, but to oblige him to sue to me

me for all extraordinaries ; by which means, having him ever under my thumb for his superfluities, let his natural temper be what it would, he should never dare to expose more of it to me, than would be consistent with the profoundest complaisance and submission.

Dear sister, added I, methinks I am already in possession of immense riches, and am now plotting and contriving means for its imployment. I already behold my equipage, my servants, all truckling to my nod, and moving, but as I direct them ; with all the gaping world around me, admiring my person, and envying at my felicity.

Methinks ! added I, I could even fancy myself translated into a superior order of beings, to mankind, as unfit, even for the society of the plodding kind of mortals, all labouring about me, for the attainment only of what I shall be in possession of, and making me the standard to bound their supremest ambition by.

Lettice replied, that if an increase of wealth, was to drive her brains into half the confusion mine seemed to be pestered with, she would rather forego all prospect of it, and exchange post with her mamma's chambermaid, than endure the like torment

not with its reality, as I did with barely
the shadow of it.

Torment ! sister, said I, pray afford it
proper name ; call it joy, transport,
exultation of the senses, and felicity in the
highest superlative degree. O ! my dear,
what an all-rapture at the thought of it ; what
shall I be, when the enjoyment shall
be realized to me ? Why, I shall be trans-
ported into heaven itself. — I cannot sup-
pose it in imagination only.

Shall I be free with you ? my dear, said
sister, and tell you wherein I should
see my most extensive happiness ? I re-
plied, that she might, and welcome ; but
I would be freed, if she at last could
fix it to center in aught else (but what
myself had proposed) to take up her
time.

When child ! said she, all that I can wish
in life is no more than this ; that I
be blessed with a sober, judicious, and
disposed husband ; whose estate shall
exceed what my fortune, be it more
or less, may demand ; one, who will place
his views with my sex, in my person,
and will never think himself happier with
them than I can make him ; one,
who will, in proportion to his substance,
give me no enjoyment of a prudent wife,
submitting

submitting all things to his pleasure and convenience ; now, with such a mate, should I be further blessed with some few children, the mutual pledges of our affections, and these, by nature, inclined to good, and virtuous courses ; let my fortune, as I said before, and his estate, but be sufficient for sustaining us above penury ; whilst our interests being alike, if our inclinations are but so too ; I shall have arrived at not only all that will be desirable to me in life ; but at what I surmise, to be the most extensive and consummate pitch of felicity I am capable of.

As for all that ostentatious pomp you seem so craving after, said she, it is deceptive only, a phantome ; a delusory dream, subsisting (if at all substantial) in the fancy, rather than in the seat of solid judgment ; nor will it bear a single reflection to dwell upon it, without galling.

You may perceive, sister, added she, that I am as desirous of happiness as you can be, and for that purpose have fixed my choice upon an end, that succeeding, will make me so, without farther caring after unattainables ; but you, my dear, continued she, whose mind seems set upon vanities, can never rest so long as there is any novelty to be attempted by you ; nay, fo

so unsteady, are all the pursuits you propose, that life would, at its utmost extent, be too contracted a space for presenting all those scenes, your brains would ever labour with ; till having seen all the variety this theatre of earth could exhibit to you, still would you be as discontented, that there remained no more behind for your amusement; for he, whose mind is ever reaching after what is to come, can never be happy in the present good ; and what is past, seeming to him, but as a vapour ; what room can there be from them for his contentment ? without which, there can be no true happiness.

My mamma sending for us both down to take a walk with her in the garden before dinner, my sister instantly obeyed her call, leaving me half dressed, half undressed, follow her as I best could, which intirely broke off our argument, at a time, when my thinking, I had such matter to have produced in justification of my own opinion, as would have been for ever unanswerable by her ; but it being now too late, I had only to dress and follow her, resolved, however, not to leave the subject altogether forsaken by me, but at our leisure meeting, to convince her, if possible,

possible, of the errors I conceived her to be under.

C H A P. III.

*Renew their debate before their mamma.
Their mamma's resolution. Miss Letitia's good sense. Defer going to church upon a letter from Mr. Sm-ell. A description of the esquire in Exchange-Alley.*

I HAD the augmentation of my circumstances so much at heart, and such a flow of convictions rushed in upon me, all perverse of my sister's way of thinking, that lest she should take occasion, in my absence, to engage my mamma on her side of the question, before I should have an opportunity of defending my own positions, I huddled on my things at any rate, and sought them out as soon as possible.

I made no doubt, but they had been upon the topick of our discourse, and was the rather persuaded so in my own breast, by their profound silence at my approaching them;

them ; which signified to me, that though they chose not I should find them at it, yet being therein interrupted by me, they had not recovered themselves, for falling into other conversation : so that perceiving them, as I imagined, at a stand ; that I might give vent to a subject I longed to come off with triumph in ; madam, said I, little doubt can be made by me, but that my sister has been stating our controversy to you ; it being what was broken off in the midst, by your orders to wait upon you here : I must beg of you not to receive a prejudice from her manner of reporting it behind my back ; but before you shall publish your opinion, to let me also have an impartial hearing from you.

My mamma seemed greatly surprized at my harrangue, protesting, that she was a stranger to my meaning ; nor had my sister informed her of a syllable that had passed between us ; but as I had offered so fair an occasion for desiring to know what we had been debating, she hoped we would now explain to her.

My sister would fain have put off my mamma with its being but a chimerical subject, that we had started merely to amuse ourselves, whilst we were dressing,

and her wonder, how I could imagine she had been recapitulating it ; upon which, I believe, my mamma would have thought no more of it, had not I, in my zeal for victory, and conceiving some indignation at her calling the debate chimerical, and trifling, replied, that however lightly she might esteem my arguments, I was certain, that not only my mamma herself, but all other women upon earth, would be clearly of my way of thinking ; as I little disputed, but she herself was in her heart, though she seemed to put on so grave a face at opposing me : for that truly, I took it to be the one thing only, to make life perfectly relishable.

My mamma was now so importunate for an ecclaircissement, that I, without farther ceremony, bolted it out as my opinion, that no young woman could possibly have too large a fortune : for I said, as money was the purveyor of every thing in life, so nobody who desired to be benefited in life, could have too much of it. It was the supplyer of every thing we could wish, or want, and that he therefore, who had most, was most happy ; and now, sister said I, pray tell your story.

She did so, and I must confess, most candidly, and as near as possible, in the very

Very words she had before signified her mind to me in.

I had not taken near the notice of her sentiments before, as I took while she was reporting them to my mamma : so that I really began now to stagger in my belief, of which side of the question the old lady would take ; but still, I could not imagine any person to be so stupid, as not to pronounce money the supreme good.

I told my mamma therefore, that having now heard what each of us had to say for our several tenets, I would desire her to give sentence, which of us she believed to be right.

She replied, that we might both be in the right, if we really believed the fruition of our desires; as we had expressed them to her, would make us severally happy ; but she much questioned, whether each, enjoying the course we had specified, would do the business : for that, the human appetites being ever craving after somewhat not in hand ; though we should each possess as large a share, as possible, of what we then esteemed the sole desirables by us ; yet, after this had been for a while familiarized to us, we should look upon it as a matter of course, and forgetting to be truly thankful for it, by coveting still

somewhat we had not, most probably meet with some disappointment, even in our present enjoyment ; under either of which cases, we could not stile ourselves compleatly happy.

As for what my sister coveted, she said, it was capable of superinducing happiness, and more so, for that it was founded upon reason, whereby it might prove lasting, whilst the effect subsisted ; but she feared that my practices would have quite contrary effects, in that they were most unreasonable, to be pursued by a rational creature, who had other business assignd it, as essential to its well being, which it would find to be incompatible with them.

Nay, she said, as all true felicity subsisted in the mind of the possessor, without the concurrence of which, both every act and purpose, would be insignificant ; so the reflection upon the past, and the hope of succeeding pleasures, wrought more forcibly upon the mind, than the present enjoyment of them ; and if so, she said, my sister's acquests would bear the reflection, and consequently would keep up a continual state of tranquility in her mind, as being daily renewed to her ; whereas, the jollity I had purposed to circumscribe my felicity by, would be ever fading ; and so, perpetually

perpetually attended with some mental pang or other, to the perversion of all solid joy from my past transactions, and to the interdicting all confidence of it in my future.

She added, that surely, if it could be reasonable for either of us to erect such castles, upon the expected gains of our father, it might much more become her so to do, who had a right to an equal participation of them with my father himself, before they could come to either of our turns to inherit them; but added, that she contented herself perfectly with her own way of living; nor indeed, should she, were it put to her free choice, make her election for engaging in any new scenes of life, at her years; so that whether Mr. Sm—ll succeeded or not in his enterprize, it was a matter of such indifference to her she said, as would never create her a single moment's uneasiness.

My mamma, having thus given the preference to my sister's side of the argument, it became me to refrain from reprobaches; though I expected she would have crowded over me, with no little triumph, and have laughed at my conceits as untenable; and I had prepared myself with such a reply, as would not have fail-

ed of extending the breach between us ; but my sister's good sense prevented it : for as our debate had slept in the confines of her own breast, at first, had not my impatience displayed it to my mamma ; so perfectly satisfied with the old lady's sentence in her favour, she seemed not to extend the merits of her own judgment to the depreciating that of a sister : so that she never after mentioned it in derogation of my opinion.

At my first proposing the case to my mamma, it was without the least hesitation at any difficulty with her, in declaring point blank in my favour ; nor could I, now my sister had dropt the argument, prove so rude as to pretend to an impeachment of the old lady's judgment ; but he that complies against his will, is of his own opinion still ; nor could all the philosophy in nature, have gained an hair's breadth upon my determination ; but that money, procuring all things, must itself, be the sole blessing of life.

Our walk being now concluded by the dinner-bell, no sooner had we dined, but we ordered the chariot for visiting, and from one exercise to another, spun out about a week, without the least farther altercation upon the above point : for my
sister

sister being altogether silent upon the subject, my spirit was too great to begin upon it, lest she should have censured me for impatience, upon the cause going against me ; but on the Sunday morning, when we were all superbly dressed, and just waiting for the coach to convey us to the church, comes the postman with a letter from my father.

Our servant put it into my mamma's hands, as we were all sitting in print for our departure ; but such a change as ensued, not only in our persons, but behaviour too ; upon my mamma's crying out upon sight of the superscription, here is a letter, children, from your father, as had nothing farther happened, had amply disqualifed me; for every function of church duty for that day ; but not a moment scarce had passed, before unfolding it; sit silent, said my mamma, and I'll read it to you.

WILLIAM SMELL, esq;

To Mrs. MARGARET SMELL.

My DEAR,

" I Happily arrived here on Wednesday night ; but had been far more am-

" ply so, had my good genius directed
" me hither a fortnight ago.

" The fatigue of my journey, after rid-
" ing near fifty miles a day for two days
" together, demanded an early repose,
" upon my arrival at my inn: so that I
" drank but a mew of broth, e're I stept
" into bed, where I found myself greatly
" refreshed the next morning.

" I dressed, and went from coffee-house
" to coffee-house, where I watched all
" discourses, and picked up as much as I
" could, relative to stocks; but being
" unknown, could make little of it: nor
" could I gain a word with my broker,
" would I have giveh him all I was worth;
" but he bade me come to him in Ex-
" change-alley, where if he possibly could,
" he would speak to me. I went then
" into Exchange-alley, though it cost me
" a full half hour's attack, to gain the pass
" from Cornhill; but here, I had need
" of an interpreter, equally, as I had been
" landed in Asia: for though many of
" the words perpetually bawling in my
" ears, had a turn of the English idiom;
" yet the variety of nations, combining
" in the same syllables, formed sounds as
" different from each other as Hebrew
" from French, or English.

" I ob-

" I observed each man, with many
 " papers in his hand, and taking more
 " than ordinary notice of one of them,
 " who to my thinking (by his creeping
 " after me which way ever I turned,
 " when the least room imaginable was
 " made for me) had a design upon my
 " pocket, I watched him more narrowly
 " than the rest, being very dirty in his
 " garments, and with a black beard, a
 " full span long; till at length, a well
 " dressed gentleman coming up to him;
 " what price to day? said he. The fol-
 " low in disguise pulled him then up into
 " a corner.

" I had now almost lost him, being
 " overborne for some time, by the crowd
 " that impelled me forwards with it; but
 " at length recovering myself, by main
 " force, I made my way up to my dis-
 " guised man, determined, if possible,
 " to see whether some mischief would not
 " befall the gentleman from him; till at
 " length, observing him to pay the black
 " man two hundred guineas, as he said
 " it was, and taking in lieu thereof some
 " scraps of paper from him; upon their
 " parting, I begg'd the favour of the
 " gentleman to inform me, what he had

" paid the ruffianly man so much money for ?

" Hush ! hush ! said the gentleman ;
 " take care what you say, of as topping a
 " man as most in the city ; but I per-
 " ceive, sir, added he, you are a stranger
 " here, and therefore I shall satisfy you,
 " that I have been purchasing some lust-
 " ring shares of him.

" Lusting shares ! sir, said I. Pray
 " excuse my demand, of what you mean
 " by them. They are what will be
 " transferrable here, sir, said he ; but
 " as you are a stranger to such things, it
 " would take up too much time to per-
 " fect you at present, in the understanding
 " of them. That man you seem to think
 " so meanly of, added he, and I, have
 " lately dealt very largely ; and no longer
 " ago than yesterday, I paid him twelve
 " hundred pounds, for Mine-Adventures,
 " York-buildings, and Temple-mills ; of
 " all which, I expect to make at least two
 " hundred per cent. by Monday next ;
 " but I am sorry I am in such haste, said
 " he, and must leave you : for if I have
 " but any luck where I am going, I will
 " have five hundred pounds third sub-
 " scription before night, yet.

" I would now have given my right-hand, but for a quarter of an hour's discourse with my Broker, to have learned what all these cramp names meant; but had been jostled about for some hours in the multitude, without the least prospect of the man; till I was so fatigued with standing, and squeezing, and being squeezed; that I verily believed I should have fainted away, and if so, I must have been trodden to pieces; nor presented there to me the least remedy: for I might as well have thrust my body through a stone-wall, as through the close packed mob that surrounded me.

" At length, being pretty tall, you know my dear, and over-topping many that flood near me, I caught a glimpse of Mr. H——t, at quite the farther end of the alley; but being noways able to come at him, and for fear I should lose sight of him again, I even stood on tiptoe, and called out, Mr. H——t! Mr. H——t! as loud as ever I could roar; but he heard me not; and then, an unmannerly fellow near me, crying out, stop some thing down the throat of that bawling son of a b——ch there, made

" made me so ashamed, that I could not
" say a word more, and so I lost him.

" O! my dear, if ever man deserved
" to be well paid for his labour, most
" certainly I am he; for save a dish of
" coffee at my inn in the morning, I ne-
" ver tasted bit or sup till eleven o'clock
" at night, that I arrived there again, the
" clock having struck ten, before I could
" possibly disengage myself from that
" confounded alley.

" What with the fatigue of the day,
" and so long fasting, I feared I should
" never have over-lived the night; then
" being so hungry at my return home,
" that I could have eaten my fingers;
" I ordered a chicken for my supper,
" thinking, after a good meal, I should
" have composed myself, and recovered
" my strength by morning; but how are
" men's prospects disappointed, as it
" were, merely for disappointment's sake,
" where they seem to have the most pro-
" mising aspect!

" My landlady sent me, instead of the
" chicken I had bespoke, an old cock,
" with cabbage as firm as a flint, that
" had only been warmed in the water;
" and this, through the craving of my
" appe-

" appetite, I swallowing all down ; scarce
 " had I been in bed for an hour, before
 " I was obliged to awaken the whole fa-
 " mily ; nor had I ever survived till
 " morning, if Thomas, perceiving my
 " condition, had not brought me up an
 " apothecary in his hand.

" He felt my pulse, and enquired into
 " my condition ; but was so long about
 " it, and in sending ~~and~~ a remedy, that
 " I had almost given myself over for lost ;
 " till, at length, a pulse he ordered me,
 " operating most violently, weakened me
 " so after it, that I have been forced to
 " keep my bed best part of this day,
 " whilst others have been making their
 " fortunes. As to day is H——t's sun-
 " day, he has promised to be with me
 " to-morrow it being his leisure day, and
 " then we shall settle matters so, as to
 " know what I am to go upon next week.
 " You shall hear from me again by
 " Tuesday's post, if I have time for it ;
 " when I hope to have some good news
 " for you ; but you must expect me to
 " be shorter ; nor indeed had I been so
 " prolix in this, but that being ordered
 " to keep the house to day, it has been
 " the best part of my afternoon's employ-
 " ment.

" ment. I am, with my love to the
" girls,

" My dear,

" Your loving husband,

" W. SM—ELL."

C H A P. IV.

*Descent upon the above letter. Molly
passionate. Miss Letitia's notion of
evils. Molly's impatience. Molly
believes her sister an hypocrite. Be-
nefit of composure. Discommodity of
its contrary. Letter from Mr.
Sm—ell, of an honest friend in
the alley.*

IF the hoped for augmentation of my portion at sight of the above epistle, had diverted my thoughts from all holy exercises; how much more had my perplexities at the hearing of it read to me, incapacitated me for the least attention to serious subjects. My passions so subdued all reverence to my father, that I had the greatest conflict in my own mind, to prevent

vent my inveighing bitterly against him, for the idle account he had given of himself, for a full week that he had now left us ; especially, as himself had allowed, that other people had been making their fortunes, whilst he had been only gorging, and discharging it again.

My mamma's tears ran tickling down her cheeks like little rivulets, at the thoughts, as she told us, of what our poor father had suffered, without her to have nursed and attended him in his illness ; and then, should he relapse again, in a strange place, with only the careless servants of an inn about him, his life, for aught that she knew, might be indangered by it : so that she seemed to have relinquished all comfortable hopes whatever, till she should receive his next promised letter, in the middle of the week.

She asked us, what we thought of my father's condition from the letter ? For that, as to her part, she was satisfied he had not made the worst of his case to her, for fear of the shock she must sustain from it. My sister desired her to have patience till she should hear from him again, and nor, in the mean time, to deject herself through vain conjectures, upon mischiefs that might never happen, nay, had her

papa

papa been in any dangerous way, she said, he would not, nay, could not have been supported under the fatigue of so long a letter : so that putting all things together, she was of opinion his health would be perfectly established before we shoud hear from him again ; but however, it had never been her custom, she said, to anticipate evils, by tormenting reflections upon them, which if not wholly void of foundation, might be quite foreign to our imaginations ; evils would be evils, when they arrived, she said, which was full time enough for her to lament them, as then, she should have some certainty where to apply her grief.

My mamma then desiring my sentiments upon the letter. Why ? truly madam, said I, if I may be permitted to deliver my genuine sense of the thing ; I don't take my father to be a man any ways qualified for the enterprize he has undertaken. The affair is too fatiguing for him, you may plainly see ; or instead of repeating the satisfaction he took in bed every night, he would have hinted at least, at the thousands he had in prospect ; for can it be presumed, that whoever goes into Exchange-alley, as he calls it, must necessarily be borne about like a cork in a river,

river, involuntarily, from noon to midnight, without either perfecting the least business of the place, or being able to release himself from it? Believe this, who can; as for my part, it appears to me but an idle story, and shews how unlikely such a man as my father is for making money amongst the cunning ones.

One may stare at a limner for ages, said I, without ever being able to imitate him with effect; and so may my father be swayed about there till this time twelve-month, without the least addition to his stock, if he makes not proper observations, and behaves like the people about him.

Pray, added I, what could have been fairer hint, than the gentleman gave him of what was proper for him to buy? Did not he tell him, he would make two hundred per cent. of it in a few days? Now I remember our writing-master used to say, that per cent. was doubling my own hundred; and if so, this must be trebling of —— What, and might my father have laid one thousand pounds three, in as many years time? It's enough to distract one in his idea, and what I fear, he will never have a second opportunity for, he not intending

tending to set about it till the gentleman will have received his money.

Besides, madam, said I, would any man in so money-a-getting time, have tarried at home the whole day that he wrote your letter, only because he had brought up his last night's supper, if his head had been properly turned to advantage? Wherefore, excuse me, madam, said I, for insisting, that my father might more safely have employed any head than his own, in a task he is so very unequal to.

The coach now waiting for us, my mother judged it most prudent for her to tarry at home; since she should never be able to confine her thoughts wholly to the matter in hand, she said; and should they stray to my father, she might but expose herself to the notice of the congregation around her; but recommended my sister's, and my going, to us.

My sister then rising, took her gloves, and marched to the coach, as unconcernedly, as if noways interested in mamma's, or my strugglings; but for my part, I begg'd to be excused from going too: for if mamma was doubtful, whether she could refrain from weeping or not; I might have equal cause for uncertainty, I said, whether I should fall into exclama-
tions

tions or not, against the management I had been apprized of, at so critical a money-getting juncture.

My concern, however, was but to very little purpose, for stay we must, till fresh advices from my father should, as I hoped, put me into heart again, by rectifying all past failings.

Now, what gave me almost as much vexation, as the loss of what my father was already possessed of would, was the tranquility, wherewith my sister behaved, and also spake of my father's transactions : for I could not but believe it all a grimace put on against her inward feeling of things, to demonstrate the command she had over her passions ; and so I told her, and at the same time, that I took it for a pretence, it being out of nature, that the prospect of good fortune should seem to have no effect upon her ; unless, through such a constraint over her appetites, as must be in private excruciating to her.

She denied absolutely, that the prospect of good fortune would be void of its proper effects upon her ; but argued, that undoubtedly she might have a different sense of what I called good fortune, from what I had ; otherwise, she said, I might esteem her but a machine, whose movements were

~~what our intentions are.~~

~~I am not on~~
~~the most extensive~~
~~of felicity I am~~

~~As for all the~~
~~seem so craving~~
~~tive only, a pha-~~
~~subfifting (if at~~
~~rather than in t~~
~~nor will it bear~~
~~upon it, without~~

~~You may per-~~
~~that I am as de-~~
~~can be, and for~~
~~my choice upon~~
~~will make me s~~

My mamma read it to herself; but being sensible how acceptable its contents would be to us; rather than deprive us for a single moment of the delight she could thereby confer upon us; she sent one of the servants to inform us of the receipt of it, and to desire us to return immediately.

This last clause, as to my own particular, might have been spared; my very soul being upon the wing to be mistress of it: and, notwithstanding the tea was before us, just ready for distributing about, I ordered the coach to the door; looked out for my scarf and fan, and had disposed myself for stepping into it, in an instant; whilst my sister sat as gravely, sipping at her first dish, and launching out into her commendations of it, as if we had been to tarry all night.

This supine demeanour of my sister, so nettled me, that after a turn or two in the room, to signify my impatience for her delay, without working the least effect upon her; I flung out of the room in a rage, assuring her, that however she might value her mamma's orders, for my own part, I would testify my obedience to them, and would directly return without her.

The young lady, desirous that we should finish our tea, and seeing my sister inclined
to

to it, ran after me into the hall, and insisting upon my return, till my sister was also ready for going ; I could noways withstand her injunction ; but to shew my resentment at the uneasiness I was under, not a drop would I drink, but sat watching every sip of my sister's, in hopes it would have been her last ; till waiting for her fifth dish, I had burst with indignation, had I not vented myself in the following manner.

It is possible for you, sister, said I, who would value yourself upon every submission to a parent's will, to sit thus unmoved, after my mamma's command to return immediately, as if you gave the preference to an itch of your palate, against her positive injunction ? You are sensible of the occasion she expects us for, and she may be now waiting, under the most anxious inquietudes till she sees us.

Poh ! poh ! replied she, it is the knowledge of the cause of her message, that affords me the liberty of slackening my pace to her ; nor is it for her own sake, but for ours, that she ordered our return so immediately, presuming, we should be glad of the information she has for us ; but what if we hear it to-night ? what if to-morrow ? There can be no alteration made
in

just by that ; then why so over zealous for acquiring this moment, what a few more I offer you on course ? Therefore with miss's leave, I will drink but another dish two, and go with you.

It so happens sometimes, that one can't avoid mentally commanding, what still hates from one's heart, most abominably ; as in the case before me, I could but observe the easy figure my sister de, in the eye of our common friend, to it I made, labouting under my own fulson, and the ill opinion of the ng lady at the same time ; but my im- ence for the least disappointment in views, had ever been so impetuous, this had not been the first instance by y, of the subjecting myself to the con- of my companions by it.

We were now both upon our return ; n I had promised myself sufficient re- ge upon my sister, so soon as ever she ld begin to censure my past behavioür, made but little doubt she would do, n she should have me alone with her ; not a word passing from her, the dog- ges of my temper, prevented my be- ing with her first, lest she should con- ure, that I wanted to curry favour her.

OL. I.

D

We

We were now arrived with my mamma,
when she read us the following lines from
my father.

WILLIAM SM—LL, esq;

To Mrs. MARGARET SM—LL.

MY DEAR,

" AS I told you in my last, H——t
" was to be with me the next day,
" so he came accordingly.

" I soon discovered, that my South Sea
" stock, of which, as I told you, I had
" seven thousand pounds capital, was
" worth about thirty thousand pounds.
" Now the question put to me by him
" was, whether I would chuse to dispose
" of it for the present profit, or whether
" I would let it remain, and stand the
" chance of the farther rise of it ?

" I asked him, if there were no other
" ways of disposing money to advantage,
" and hinted to him what I had heard
" about lustring, mills, and subscriptions.
" His reply was, that there were infinite
" ways of employing cash, and named
" little less than thirty to me; but not
" taking them down in writing, one
" drove

drive the other out of my head, so far, that I cannot recollect one of them.

" Having agreed not to sell my South Sea, as yet ; I am now at the utmost loss for money to engage with in the numberless other articles ; whereby hundreds, nay, thousands, are to be daily made.

" I fell into company yesterday, with one of the most gentleman-like man I think I ever conversed with ; who perceiving me to be unacquainted with the methods in practice, by my inquisitiveness into particulars, took me aside to a private alley hard by us, where telling me, that if he was not mistaken in my discourse, I would gladly be informed of the several profitable schemes on foot. He said, that he knew not how it had happened, but the sudden fancy he had taken to my person, had inspired him with an inclination for being useful to me, and that, perhaps, no more than I could probably conceive, or indeed, than most men upon the Exchange could well be ; and then told me, that before he should proceed to display to me the method of making an immense fortune, he must beg leave to put one question to me, from my

" candid answer whereto, he would be at
 " a word with me, what gainer I might
 " expect to be by the schemes then in agi-
 " tation.

" I returned him many thanks for his
 " favour to me, and desired him to put
 " his question, assuring him, my answer
 " should be sincere. Then sir, said he,
 " have you any, and how much money
 " to dispose of? I replied, that my reac-
 " money was but trifling, save what
 " then had in the South Sea, which I wa-
 " advised not to displace as yet, for that I
 " should certainly almost double it; but
 " that I had an estate of upwards of three
 " thousand pounds a year in the country,
 " which I could find in my heart to co-
 " vert into cash, for the benefit of a mo-
 " extensive way of traffick, in the prese-
 " run of merchandize.

" You speak like a man of sense, I
 " said he, and such are the men that
 " love; and to shew you that I do so,
 " you will give me a particular of the
 " estate to-morrow morning, I doubt no-
 " but to help you to a purchaser.

" I assured him I would do it, and appoint-
 " ed him an hour and place to meet me at;
 " but still shewed my uneasiness, for that it
 " would take up so long to compleat the

-" title

" title to a purchase, under the dilatory
 " proceedings of the lawyers, that I
 " feared I should lose the advantages in
 " the mean time that others would be
 " making.

" He bade me take no concern for that ;
 " he was perfectly acquainted with the
 " whole nature of those things, he said,
 " and upon sight of my particular, and
 " my answer to a few of his questions, he
 " would chalk out a method of proceeding
 " to me, quite foreign to my way of think-
 " ing ; but conduced to my very pur-
 " pose.

" I finished my particular last night,
 " and waited upon him this morning
 " with it ; when hearing that I was mar-
 " ried, he said you will have your thirds
 " upon the estate, and I making a dif-
 " ficulty how I could dispose of that part,
 " for I had told him you was not jointur-
 " ed ; leave that to me, said he ; a dedimus
 " will do the business, if you are sure
 " she'll be willing to join in the sale.

" I replied, that you was one of the best
 " wives in England, and would gladly
 " come into whatever I proposed, as be-
 " neficial to your family ; upon which,
 " he said, he would know what I asked
 " for his estate ; I said, five and twenty

" years purchase. Say thirty, cried he,
 " and I'll get it you ; and once in two or
 " three days I will bring you a purchaser
 " to treat about it. Now there was ho-
 " nesty, my dear, to a man who was the
 " stranger that I was to him !

" I could not yet help shewing my con-
 " cern for the delay this must give to
 " my affairs, as I must be obliged to sit
 " with my hands tied and unactive till
 " the purchase-money should be paid to
 " me, I told him ; but surely ! this is
 " one of the most sensible and expe-
 " rienced man in all nature : for he
 " made no more of my complaint
 " than a flea-bite ; asking me, what
 " schemes I should chuse to invest my
 " money in, provided I then had it in
 " hand ? I mentioned the three that I had
 " heard of in Exchange-alley, and which
 " the gentleman purchased of the bearded
 " man the first time I was there ; where-
 " upon he told me, he would help me
 " to what I pleased of them, and because
 " my money was not ready, I should pur-
 " chase them for me only ; but I thank-
 " ed him for that, declaring, that if I
 " purchased, it should be for good and all,
 " which made him laugh heartily ; after
 " which, he explained himself, that what
 " he

agreement by time was, that though I
absolutely should contract for them at
present at a certain price, yet they
should not be delivered to me till a fu-
ture time, by which I might conclude
my money would be paid me; and
that then depositing the price before
stipulated for, I was to receive the
shares, with all manner of advantages
upon them.

Who short, my dear, in order to save
the time possible, he that very after-
noon contracted for shares to the a-
mount of seventy thousand pounds and
wards for me: so that since I am
launched, I doubt not by the
help of the deeds, not only to pay
my new purchase, but to clear alike
my own pocket too; and now
as me, he will look out for some
subscription.

We are to go to his lawyer to-mor-
row, who is to make a little writing be-
tween us some-how relating to the
shares; but whatever so honest a man as
he can propose, it is none of my busi-
ness you know to dispute; he having
by his credit, as good as given me many
thousand pounds into my pocket al-
ready.

“ I desire you will go into my study,
 “ and send me all the title deeds, that
 “ lie in any of the drawers of the wal-
 “ nut-tree nest of drawers, to lay before
 “ council ; and if any one comes to you
 “ with a dedimus, as he called it, you
 “ will do therewith as he directs, about
 “ passing the estate, and let me know
 “ when it is done.

“ I shall be glad to hear, whether any
 “ of my neighbours have gotten a scent
 “ of what is transacting here ; however,
 “ be sure you say nothing of what has
 “ called me from home to any one, un-
 “ less to my friend Tom Rogers, to whom
 “ I could wish some of my own success,
 “ as he, poor man, wants it, and might
 “ make himself in a few weeks. Re-
 “ member me to the girls,

“ And believe me,

“ Your loving husband,

“ W. SM——LL.”

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

*titia's advice upon the letter. Molly's
in the opposition. Mrs. Sm—ell's
nswer to her husband. Molly ex-
pects a great fortune. Mr. Archer
news his addresses. Resolves to cast
im off contemptuously. Mother and
ughters pass away their right to
the estate. Letitia greatly affected at
Polly's hate of thoughtfulness.
titia recovers.*

VELL! children, said my mam-
ma ; you see now how the labours
our poor papa are like to be blessed.
s ! poor soul ! his cares are all for you ;
it is surprising, how money should be
de to encrease thus ! whilst we, who
e at such a distance, know only that it
s so, without penetrating at all into the
ttery of it.

But what think you of your father's
rting with the family estate ? How shall
i relish that, after its being conveyed
m father to son, for so many genera-
ns ? Why ? truly, madam, said my
er, I have been thinking of that, with-

out being able to discover the least necessity for it, as my father has already, he says, above thirty thousand pounds in the South Sea : for why should we chuse to be the very richest family in the nation ? Surely ! that, with his estate, will be a full competency for himself and his family, whilst he and you live ; and a most ample inheritance for my sister and me at your deceases. Wherefore I should think, madam, added she, that you might write to my papa, to advise him to rest contented with what he has gotten, and to let the family estate remain in his own hands still.

Had my sister been governed by discretion in what she offered, said I, madam, I should not need to trouble you with my sentiments ; but when she has taken upon her to carve, for not only you, and my papa, but me too, as well as herself; I think it becomes me to oppose her.

Truly, sister ! added I, it seems to me to be a very unbecoming presumption in you to assign what you please as a competency for my papa and mamma ; but then to pretend to limit my views, to the scanty pattern of what you are pleased to stile an ample inheritance ; as you have no warrant for it from me, I must intreat you to be silent on my behalf, whatever your own

so groveling soul may put up with : for
we me leave to assure you, that no narrower
bounds would confine my ambition, than
those of being the wealthiest lady in the
nation, if it could prove my good fortune
to be so. Therefore, madam, said I, to
my mamma, it is my notion, that my fa-
ther acts most prudently, in purposing to
settle with his estate, which may bring him
handsome returns for the purchase-money ;
rather than by retaining it, to ascertain
such a trifle to my sister and me at his
death.

I suppose, madam, said I, you will soon
answer my father's letter, wherein I must
beg you to state, how unbecoming of his
recent advancement in life, my present
attire appears to be ; having but little
eck in it, above the degree of an upper
servant's wear. Pray, therefore, recom-
mend to him the transmitting me some
articles of the newest fashioned silks, both
for common and extraordinary occasions ;
also, some linen of all sorts, and laces,
with the several other parts of our dress,
as you may please to specify them : for
that I am already scarce mistress, you may
tell him of any thing to be seen abroad in,
that will not subject him to the reflections
of our neighbours. As to my sister, added I,

from the mean opinion she seems to have of herself, she may conclude, that her old ones will serve her turn : for which reason, I only speak for myself ; though could I but penetrate her heart, I am persuaded the greatest stab that could be given to it, would be the sight of me in any particular more admirably decorated than herself ; however she may persist in the ridiculous farce of self-denial.

My sister being about to have replied to what I had offered ; my mamma enjoined us both to silence : for that though the disputes of her children, so long as we confined ourselves to modesty in our speeches to each other, were very pleasing to her ; yet, when we could not bridle our tempers, without lashing out to snarling, and invectives against each other ; nothing then could be more her aversion.

As to what she should mention to our papa relative to us, it should be jointly for our mutual advantage, she said : for that, if my sister was naturally less assuming than myself, that could be no cause with her, for her faring in any degree worse than me ; and then giving me a severe rub or two upon some parts of my speech she had deemed impertinent ; she charged me to have more guard over my tongue
another

other time, or it should be the worse for me; since nothing could be more odious to her than to see young women too open with that member, which ought to be the criterion of their modesty and discretion.

I gave my mamma the hearing of what I said; but without the least other effect upon me than the passing through my mind; nor indeed, had I at this time leisure for reflecting upon it; but again, immediately my mamma to expedition in hand, she the next morning read over to me the answer she was just then about sending to my father.

To W——M S——ELL, Esq;

MY dear Mr. S——ell may assure himself, that the sincerest wishes of his poor wife, attend his every step through the busy world he is now continually in.

Your dear children, and I, upon reading your last, were extremely glad to collect from the course of your occupations, that you was gotten pure and well again; for you was silent as to that article. Your extraordinary acquirements, have given fair scope for our admiration,

“ admiration, how such incredible effects
 “ can be brought about : nor seem you,
 “ as yet, to assign the least period, to
 “ your proceeding still in the same man-
 “ ner, by your requesting of me to join
 “ in the sale of your estate ; whereby, to
 “ raise a further supply, for a deeper en-
 “ gagement in your enterprizes.

“ You may assure yourself of my con-
 “ currence therein, who cannot but esteem
 “ it somewhat providential, that you
 “ should fall, unexpectedly, into such
 “ hands, as may prove so exceedingly
 “ beneficial to you : make much therefore
 “ of so stanch a friend, by submitting to
 “ whose judgment, you may prevent, not
 “ only abundance of fatigue to yourself,
 “ but many oversights, that might other-
 “ wise accompany your own inexperience
 “ in such affairs.

“ I have a request to make you from
 “ my daughters, who are in hopes of a
 “ proportionate advancement in their
 “ finery, to that of your opulence ;
 “ that you will send them some of the
 “ most fashionable wearables, silks, linen,
 “ and laces ; and, though they requested
 “ it not, if you would dispose in the
 “ package a necklace or two, with ear-
 “ rings suitable, and a ring or two for
 “ their

their fingers, you might command their present good wishes, perhaps, more earnestly, than for thousands in reversion, at a future day.

" I shall hint the affair to Rogers, as you desire ; and, with longing impatience, wait your return, whenever you shall conceive you have gotten enough, of which, I would not wish you overcovetous ; but leave room for others to partake with you. So recommending you to Divine Favour, I remain,

" Your dutiful wife, till death,

" M. S——ELLE.

" P. S. My daughters intreat you, not to omit a good parcel of ribbons."

Having sent this letter, my mamma invited Mr. Rogers the next day to dinner with us ; after which, she began upon my father's instructions to her, for his information how things were going at London, and the incredible advantages that might be daily made of money there ; so much, that my father, she said, by this time, must be worth above an hundred thousand pounds, which he expected in two days to be doubled ; but this, she said,

said, she intrusted to him as a privacy, his own sole use ; not to be divulged any one, upon any account whatever.

Mr. Rogers heard her patiently ; then, seemed under a great surprize th she should commit that to him as a secre which all the world, he said, was apprize of : nor was there a man of fortune, I said, in most of the adjacent countie who was not some way or other concerne therein, by their agents, though they ha given themselves no personal trouble abo it.

He confessed, he should gladly has tried his luck among the reit ; but th having no ready money by him, and h estate but small, he chose not to ventur a certainty for an uncertainty, and there fore should content himself upon his ow patrimony : however, he thanked m mamma for her good will to him ; but h had heard of it some months before.

Whether Mr. Rogers, at his depar ture from us, had not been so private a he should have been ; or how it had hap pened I know not ; but, in few day time, it was in every one's mouth, tha my father had raised an immense sum from the funds, which brought Mr

Arches

other, an old sweetheart of mine, to our
selves, to renew his pretensions to me.
Now this gentleman, had addressed me
two years before ; but as my father
did then give me but three thousand
pounds down, with the expectation of a
large part of his estate at his decease without
any heir ; he had withdrawn himself, and
expected to have heard no more of
me till now, believing I should prove
myself unworthy of his application to, he
had no hopes of succeeding with me ;
but truly, my pride, would not now
sink so low, as to surrender myself to
such a man, who had so evidently signified
an inclination to my portion, in prefer-
ence to my person ; though I resolved to
conceal my real sentiments ; and so, without
giving him a positive denial, I kept
him still dependent upon me : as my fa-
ther being absent, I pretended, that no
immediate answer could be given him
till his return : for it is most
natural, that as money begets money ; so
it is, that a woman, with one passionate suitor, need
not fear more : whilst she that has
many suitors, may remain so, till accident casts
one out of her way ; but the young fellows
are apt to be in rivalry, as to esteem her,
who

who seems a choice morsel for others,
delicacy for their own mouths too.

Mr. Archer, grew at length so impatient for my father's delay, as verily believing that to be the sole obstacle to his marriage with me, (for he had of his own, such an estate as there was no fear of my father's objecting to). He offered forthwith to marry me, if I would but consent to it, and to wait my father's courtesy for what portion he pleased to bestow upon me : and to this, he urged me prodigiously : but now, esteeming myself as good as he, and that I might have leisure, with my fortune, command a man where I pleased, from the world large about me ; I still pleased myself, not only with his sollicitations, but with the further piece of revenge, that upon my father's return, after the adjustment of my fortune, at such a rate as I had estimated it at, I would then cast him off as contemptuously, as he before had me.

Whilst I was pleasing myself with my own management, in making a dupe of my lover, came down three gentlemen to our house, who had my father's orders, for not only my mamma to relinquish her thirds upon the estate ; but for us two girls also to make over our right to the purchaser ;

shoulder so that we being called in, were together with the old lady, examined to something, I know not what; where, having all subscribed to a vast roll of parchment, our visitors, after a glass or two of wine, departed.

My sister had scarce discharged her duty, before she was observed by my mamma and me, to look as pale as death itself; insomuch, that she really alarmed us: but the gentlemen being taking their leave of us, we could not expose ourselves to her, till they were gone; when no sooner were their backs turned than my mamma, running to her, asked her how she did, and whether she was half sick, that had occasioned looking so pale? but she, still sinking, lay quite white, both hands and feet, as if every drop of blood had receded from her extream parts; my mamma screamed out for the servants to come, and I ran for the bottle of water; when, just as I entered the room, my sister fetching a deep sigh, "It is for my father," said she, and fainted directly upon my mamma's bosom. My poor mother was so frightened at this catastrophe, as neither to be able to support my sister, or give the least orders for

for her assistance ; when two of the maidservants being called by the maids, my sister was, by them, carried up stairs, aid of my mother, who was, by this time almost reduced to as low a condition herself : but, by proper applications, it soon recovering, we sent up the maid, put my sister into bed, where my mamma and I, soon after arriving, found her insensible : but, however, as we could perceive life in her, we had hopes of a revival of her spirits, when this disorder should be somewhat abated.

I have many a time, since this accident most penitentially recollect ed it, and all my thoughts upon the occasion, which would choose rather to conceal from the knowledge of mankind, were it not for the profession I have already made, of an impartial historian ; and for that my follies at the instant I am speaking of, will be make the addition of a mite, to the number of those, that I must necessarily in the progress of this work, ascribe to myself.

I must own, I say, that I was in a little measure disturbed at my sister's sickness, whilst I had reason to believe it was only a sudden temporary discomposure, which might soon be removed again : but

return with the hartshorn; I beheld her falling on my mamma's bed. I conjectured, either dead or insensible. How far was my imagination from touched with compassion towards that the first thought immediately sprung to my mind was, the doubling fortune, and the immense wealth would one day be mistress of. But having often repented of, I hope never will rather behold me in the penitent, than in that of the wicked creature, I must needs say, I

mamma kept me with her for hours, watching my sister as she lay by us; but our fears for her future ceased, in about half an hour's breathing, that she was fallen into a deep sleep; from which, my mamma said not, she said, but she would quite another creature, and purely dead, after her struggling.

my father's present employment was the topick for most of our vacant time; now my mamma and I were nearer, she began in a soft whisper, she verily believed my sister's dis- arose from her signing the deeds,

dis-

dispository of her father's estate to another family ; and the rather, she said, for that it happened so instantaneously thereupon.

I told her, I must differ in opinion from her : for that she shewed not the least reluctance whatsoever to that to which she could never have stifled, had it affected her, to the introduction of such a fatal effect over her whole being. But added, that I rather suspected it to have proceeded from something that had offended her stomach, seeing no reason for my part, for her taking offence from the loss of the estate, which would otherwise so amply recompensed to her.

My mamma replied, that for her part she could not say, but her heart fluttered so, and her hand trembled in such a manner, upon the deed being offered to her, that it was with no little difficulty she subscribed her name to it : nay, she said, when the gentleman, after she had set her seal to it, told her she must deliver it to the uses within mentioned, her knees knocked so together, that she could scarcely keep her legs ; imagining herself to be just then turning out of an edifice she had borne so many children in, and had enjoyed such delights in, as were never experienced by her to be repeated.

Well,

Well, madam! said I, daily do I find
more and more cause for blessing my
lot, that I am not of an over-thoughtful
position: for that people of this cast
are never without some dismal apprehen-
sion or other in their crowns, whereby
they supply themselves with as much solid
fright and distress, for mere shadows;
so far from having any real exil-
ence in nature, that most probably they
will have any; as if they were
fully extended upon the wheel, and
no joint of their bodies was under a
feeling of dislocation.

Now, for my part, added I, I can
entertain and grieve, when a mischief has
beaten me; but, even then, not so as to
despair myself for redress; but while
this is but a bare chance for warding off
misfortune, my joy for that, makes me
indolent, as often to overlook it when
it comes; or, at least, to hearten me up
to bear it under it.

My sister now yawning, gave us the
signal that she was awakened; which
interrupting our discourse, sent us both to
her bedside, to enquire how she found
herself: she answering us very heartily,
she found herself pure easy; my
nunna prevailed with her, to continue
in

in bed till morning ; and, sending her up some comfortable sippings, she arose on the morrow as well, to all appearance, as ever.

C H A P. VI.

Cause of Letitia's disorder. Her thoughts of the South Sea, &c. And at parting with the estate. Polly's indecent behaviour. Turned out of the room. A new lover to Polly. She dismissed Mr. Archer. Letter from Mr. Sm—ell. His description of Funwell.

NO sooner had we done breakfast the next day, than my mamma put it to my sister, what it could have been, that had occasioned her such an unaccountable disorder the preceding evening, who had never been subject to any such thing before. I had never before a like occasion, madam, said she; but of that, it is to myself, and I desire no more may be said of it. This reply, caused my mamma to be but the more importunate with her, even to insisting, that she should not secret the cause from her.

Madam,

Madam, said my sister, every one of us having our sensitive faculties variant, in no degree, from others, must necessarily be diversly affected by the same object. It may have been my misfortune to have differed in opinion from you my sister yesterday at the time of signing parchments my father sent us. I say, might have been my misfortune, but if nothing more comes of it, I have suffered sufficiently for it already. Nothing more comes of it! child, said mamma to her: why? what can you apprehend more to come of it, than that father has sold the estate, to enable to make an extraordinary advantage by purchase-money?

I cannot persuade myself, madam, re-my sister, from all the insight I have been able to gain in the affair, my father must absolutely gain by money, in proportion to what he rec'd. us, without running any risk at the time of losing: for that to me, seems infeasible, that any man, without being up for a coiner, should acquire sums of money, suddenly too, more before had; but by its by some or other, shifting from another hand for my notion is, that if every man

who would go to Exchange-alley could return laden with riches, for every his own and his family's future purposes in life ; that then no one would stay away, and all the kingdom must in a trifle of time be great men. Now this, to my apprehension, can never be : that is, I am persuaded, it is beyond the reach of possibility, and out of the nature of things ; unless, as I said before, there was money sufficient for the purpose to be imported, or new made ; whereof the increase must be infinite for every one to have neighbours fare in it.

If this is not so, I am then convinced, that as in gaming, no one can recede a gainer, without leaving some one or more loser of what he pockets ; so it must be in the present traffick, what one man gets another must lose, or all would be at a stand with them ; and if some gain so immensely, as by thousands and hundred thousands ; some must as immensely lose, to their own impoverishment and ruin ; nor, unless the chance seemed to be pretty equal, would there be fools enough found for the wary to raise their fortunes from ?

Can any body now satisfy me, added she, that my father has entered into th practice under the certain, and indefectible assurance of gaining only upon all that

undertakes, without the conditional hazard of losing? If so, I am content; tho' in this case, as other families must smart for every advantage he gains over them, I would surmise it to be at best but an unskillful method of dealing; but if there is no such positive certainty more on his side than other mens; let us put the case that chance should run against him, as I have proved it must against some of them, and may against him; insomuch, that he should then lose what he now has; what a fine condition would his family be in? Nay, pursue the thought a little farther; we may even be compelled to submit to servitude, in the very dwelling we have been free of; and obliged to lower our crests before those, who will hold up their heads as high there, as we ourselves once did in it. Mistake me not, added she, that I say these things will be so; but if a possibility may be allowed me of my father's losing the purchase-money of this estate; the first will all as possibly succeed in consequence of it.

These cogitations, madam, contained in them, had so agitated my spirits yesterday, as to overcome my sober reflections, and reduce me to the condition I was brought to for that, indeed, when I set my hand

to the deed proposed to us for relinquishing the estate ; I never more expected to be either a single penny benefited by it, or the money it has been sold for.

My sister's discourse had so sunk my mamma's spirits, that without farther saying, in contradiction to my sister's positions ; she repeated to her what a conflict she herself had suffered at the signing of them, and her cogitations at the same time ; till combining to indulge each other over their melancholy conceits, they both fell to weeping plentifully.

This irritated my passion so much, that indeed, I cannot say I confined myself within the strictest rules of decency in my behaviour to them ; but laughing at the simplicity, I cried out, that my father had acted prudently ; nor did I the least dispute, but I should soon parade it in my own coach and six, with servants in plentyness about me ; but that neither of them deserved better treatment than the freedom of walking on foot, one single degree above starving ; for their ingratitude to careful a man as my father ! nor has ceased here, had not my mother commanded me immediately out of the room from her.

Mr. Archer still plied me, closer and closer would he be said nay, but I must marry him ; nor was my sister's old tharred lover less attentive to her now ; till their courtship having been of long continuance, without his making least lodgment in her affection, he led it at length into a blockade, and contented himself with keeping off all others forming their pretensions to her : so he visited its true, and was received as a visiter in the common parlour, in presence of my mother and me, or other company chanced to be there, and whilst the affair was pro- so closer, she was well enough with it, but I, who gloried to lover's fine speeches at my heart, meant not to be caught by them, led with him into a separate room.

No occasion long to be anxious for her's farther society : for a young man whom I had seen but once at a distance, I had made about five miles off, driving into our yard with his coach and six, the very next day, and four horses on horseback in his retinue.

My sister and I, who were upon a piece needle-work at our chamber-window,

rose up instantly to see who he was, and whether we knew him or not ; when upon his alighting, I presently recollect him to be the gentleman I had been in company with the foregoing day.

I could not conceive what had brought him thither ; but lest his demand should be for me, I slipt off some of my outward things, which I had scarce exchanged for others more suitable, before a servant tapping at my door, informed me, that a gentleman in the parlour desired to speak with me.

I made him not wait two minutes before I presented myself to him ; nor he many more after he had saluted me before he had broached his errand to me.

I seemed under great surprize, having neither of us beheld the other more than once before ; but he soon had an apostle ready for his purpose, by assuring me, that the violence of his passion had constrained him to postpone all ceremony ; being persuaded, that could he but convince me of the reality of that, it would prevail for his excuse at my hands.

He then informed me who he was ; where his seat lay ; that his name was Lovewell, and that his father had been dead about twelve months, had left him,

as

his only child, an estate of five thousand pounds a year, besides ready money; that had been ever since looking out for the worthy object, at whose feet he might deposit it; but neither had yet seen, or ever might have been so happy, had he not by the most felicitous turn of fortune imaginable, been directed to me; who had put an intire stop to his farther pursuits, as absolutely containing in my opinion all, that his most sanguine hopes did aspire to.

I cannot say, but his person, his mein, behaviour, together with the air of frankness that he seemed to express himself in, made a reasonable impression upon me at a first visit: so that treating him with great courtesy, I assured him, that having no other living, I was not so wholly at his own disposal, as to be able to return an answer at present to his demand; even though his proposal should be acceptable: I could I say more than that I would consider of it. Whereupon after an hour more passed upon different subjects, he left me, under my leave for renewing his application.

All that I wanted was but a new lover, which might give me an occasion for meeting Archer; and this now presenting;

at his next visit I very shortly forbid his attendance upon me : for that, if he did not heretofore esteem me worthy of his bed, under the contracted portion my father then would be pleased to give me, I told him, I should now as contemptuously desert him, since matters were become far otherwise with me : so that I desired that might be the last time I might ever see him there.

He asking me, whether I was in earnest ? I replied, I was ; and was determined to pay him in his own coin, by expressing as little regard for him, as heretofore had for me ; upon which I parted.

I had scarce dismissed Archer above hour, before a letter arrived from my mother ; which, as my mamma always did she read over to my sister and me ; it ran as follows.

WILLIAM SMELL, esq;

To Mrs. MARGARET SMELL.

MY DEAR,

" YOU would have heard from me sooner, but both my head, my hand, and my heart, have been so otherwise

occupied, that I have scarce time for the ordinary functions of life.

It is a most intolerable difficulty that I labour under, for want of a thorough insight into figures ; and now, I lament my youthful indiligence in the sciences : were it not for my good friend Mr. Sunwell ; for that, I have learnt to his name, it would be impossible me to ascertain my daily worth. His increase is enormous, and beyond my present conception ; but that dear, kind man, is so kind as to keep an account for me, debtor and creditor, as regards it, of every several scheme I am engaged in ; nor how I shall at last recompence all his trouble on my account, I as yet determine ; but am resolved to do nobly by him.

Would you think it, my dear, that when I had signed the deeds, and came to receive my money for the estate, that, no sincere friend had disbursed the whole purchase-money, and above one hundred thirty thousand pounds more to me before the payment was due ? But I had not the least concern upon my hands, but to let him repay

“ himself, and place it to my account, as
“ he said he would.

“ O ! my dear, with what facility do
“ some men do busines, from an early
“ application to figures ! and this I have
“ lately seen so much of from Mr. Fun-
“ well, that I have many times wished I
“ had been brought up to some genteel
“ occupation for the knowledge only of
“ keeping my own books, and seeing to
“ a single farthing my whole worth with
“ a cast of my eye.

“ You would be amazed, were you to
“ behold a vast folio book he has, with
“ my name upon every page almost ;
“ where, I overlooking him some times,
“ have seen Welch copper, debtor to
“ William Sm—ell, esq; with a long
“ trail of figures down the leaf ; and in
“ another place, William Sm—ell, esq;
“ debtor to Hot Air, with figures again ;
“ debtor, figures again, almost down to the
“ bottom ; and then to observe how ex-
“ actly he will tell you, whether you are
“ debtor to Beech Masts or Beech Masts
“ debtor to you, with a jerk, by a single
“ row of figures, is surprising.

“ Two days after we had finished about
“ the estate, he advised me to sell out my
“ South Sea at seven hundred and fifty :

“ for,

" for, says he, we may buy fourth subscription cheap ; and I am not without hopes, by my interest with some of the leading men, to subscribe most of your money at par ; which, as that will be gradually encreasing to the price of the other stocks and subscriptions, will of course bring you seven times as much as I can subscribe for you.

" My dear friend ! said I, sell, sell, and subscribe it at par, if you can by all means ; but pray, where abouts is par, that I may be there in case there should be occasion for my meeting you : when laughing at my ignorance, he threw his arms round me, and hugging me ; it is the delight of my very soul, said he, to be assistant to the helpless : for therein, a man may be said to act from truly noble motives.

" In short, my love, where my increase will end or when, I cannot determine ; but as I may be induced to tarry longer here than I intended ; if any good match should offer for my daughters, of a young nobleman, whose reversionary title may be near descending, though not as yet vested in the most ample possessions, you need not stand upon that ; for I shall give them an hundred thousand pounds

" apiece down, and am not limited to
" how much more, in case his estate will
" admit of his settling accordingly.

" I have sent by the waggon, as you
" desired, some clothes and trinckets ;
" not only for my girls but yourself too ;
" which I would have increased, but for
" the hurry I am in, they cost me eight
" hundred pounds. If you should want
" more, it is but sending for them ; tho'
" I even grudge the disposal of every
" penny that is not at work for my
" profit.

" I have bespoke, and paid for a new
" coach, and have bought a pair of horses,
" that I am sure will highly please you
" with flowing mains, and tails, sweeping
" the very ground after them ; but these
" we buckle up in the dirty streets here ;
" and my intent is as I can light of them,
" to make them up a set to come down
" with.

" I go in my new coach to Exchange
" every day ; for that really the man that
" don't is even pissed upon by the com-
" pany there ; nor will they vouchsafe to
" give an answer to him.

" I wish Fanwell may have interest en-
" nough to get my money all subscribed ;
" for I shall sell it out when it comes to

" eight

eight hundred, or a thousand, he says; which he advises me to be satisfied.

" Let me hear how you like the things, and what more you would have; so wishing you all well till I see you again;

" I am,

" Your loving husband,

" W. Sm—— E.L.L."

C H A P. VII.

mother and daughters various dispositions. Blazen Funwell's character. Miss Letitia condemns them. Dispute about seeing their new clothes. Make choice of their several new things sent from London. Difference of the two sisters. Polly rates herself very highly. Resolves to reject her new lover. Polly's aspirings. Account of their father's present. Poor Polly's needless anxieties. Adventure of the watches.

We were now all sitting in judgment upon the above letter, as we usually had done upon each that had arrived

arrived before it ; but never had the good fortune to agree in our sentiments ; for my mamma, though inclined to credit my father, had yet a sort of diffidence in her nature, but not of sufficient force to destroy her hopes that all went right.

My sister, whose solidity I must allow to have penetrated farther than either my mother or I did, never shewed the least token of assent to the glittering prospects my father from time to time laid before us ; but as for my part, my views fixing themselves upon the gold, not all the arguments in nature could have diverted them from it. Nay, the conceit was so captivating to me, that I should more pleasurabley have parted with life itself, than the least hold that my ideas had laid upon it : so that I was sure to stand up for my father's doctrine, and afford an implicate faith to it.

My mamma and I both magnified the friendship of Mr. Funwell to the skies, as the foundation of all our hopes, and without whose amicable assistance, my father might have returned as he went ; for it was plain to us, we said, that H——— was too strenuous for his own interest to attend to my father's, by his absenting himself so much from him ; but there was

the

He had need of his aid, as my father had
 been with so unbiassed a friend as Mr.
 Maxwell, who had not only conducted
 him into the affair; but as my father said,
 he limited him his continuance in it too.
 All is not gold that glitters, said my
 sister. Why? my father has not been ab-
 sent a month yet; and to talk of an hun-
 dred thousand pounds apiece for his two
 daughters, ought at least to be worth half
 a million: for surely, my mamma and
 I have to reserve three fifths at least for
 our daughters; but from whence must all
 these money arise? talk but of the parlia-
 ment going to raise a million of money,
 now and then, and the people are
 ready about it; they shall all be un-
 derpaid with taxes: and yet, my father, a
 man, shall take a trip to London
 next month, and raise half the money,
 and hardly hurt by it!
 In our town, these things are unfathom-
 able, said my sister. I hope, re-
 garding no question of my fa-
 ther's integrity. He has said it, and that
 is sufficient for demanding our assent to
 it. Make I the least scruple, but it
 will add a tittle to us.
 And said my sister, that you was able
 to lay down forty thousand pounds, I
 would.

would release to you all my right to the hundred for it. O! that I had it but said I ; how pleasurable should I deposit it upon that condition ; but madam, said I to my mamma, I don't remember, that my father mentions when our clothes are to come ; does he ?

My mamma looking upon the letter again ; he has already sent them, said she. Dear madam ! then let us send to the waggoner, said I : for possibly they may be now in the country, and I never longed so much for any thing in all my life as to see them ; but how are we to know which silks are for my sister and which for me ? That must depend upon your several choices, said she ; as for what he has sent for my use, their gravity will bespeak the mine.

Madam, said I, suppose my sister and I should both admire the same thing ; you must agree that amongst yourselves, said she ; but suppose we should not agree, said I, then your sister, as elder, said she must have the first choice. What ? every thing ? demanded I, to which she replied, no, that would be carrying the seniority too far ; but that after my sister had chosen one suit, I should chuse the next, and so on.

A set

A servant having been dispatched to the agonizer at the beginning of the debate, was by this time arrived with an huge cal-box, as big as a coffin ; which was brought into the parlour between two.

My mamma ordering them to carry it p stairs into her dressing-room, I was ready to fall into fits at the thoughts of it. dear mamma ! said I, let it be opened ere, I had as leave to have no concern 'mem, as to be put off to look over 'm some time or other ; besides, the 'is thoroughly nailed, and must re- 'e a man to undo it ; therefore, pray, mamma, indulge us with seeing what papa has sent us at once.

My sister, said Letice, make me no part of your argument ; it being much more to me when it is opened I'll promise you ; therefore let mamma use her pleasure.

Such a negligent creature as you are, said I, who are void of all taste for anything but a good book, or a piece of old-wifery, indeed, may be indifferent to beauty ; but pray don't urge your indecencies as a bar to my satisfactions, which come only from a womanly pursuit of those excellencies that may best contribute to exhibiting my person in perfection.

Let

Let me tell you, madam, added I, having in some measure gained a knowledge of my own worth, it is but fitting I should judge of such things as will set me off in character ; then pray, mamma, said I, let it be forthwith opened.

My mother at length consenting, and the fellows having forced out the nailing, she ordered them to leave us ; when no two bees ever employed themselves more busily in the collection of their winter's subsistence, than mamma and I did in disburdening the box of its cargo.

I was for opening and examining every piece of goods as we proceeded ; but my mamma conceiving the task would be endless, and that we should not by that method have gone through with them by the next morning ; ordered me to lay each several sort of goods in a parcel by itself, that we might first know of what particulars our cargo consisted, and then, said she, we may turn to which we please first, and go through with that article before we proceeded with another.

In short, the particulars were so various, that the tables, chairs, and even the floor itself, was near overspread with them. There was a little box sealed up, which I would have given my right-hand almost

to

have peeped into; but that, my
mama declared, should not be opened,
all the other things were either repack-
cleared away; for fear of the loss of
thing out of it.

This being the case, I having laid all
pieces of silks by themselves, amount-
to twelve in number, whereof my
mama soon supplied herself with four;
neither of us could envy her; I
called my sister to chuse first out of
remaining eight pieces; having in
own mind pitched upon the most
blue silk, with a trailing pattern
all over it, that ever I beheld in
and this I had so smothered up
the other pieces, as to have little
of her spying it out; but, as she
about taking out a brocaded silk,
ing down a piece that covered my
she casting her eye to this, I
aid she, this pleases me the best of
them. It is an old patterned thing,
but however you have taken it.
would gladly have mortified her if I
though I was ready to burst with
but now the election fell upon me,
I suffered the above disappointment,
not where to chuse, so that, left
would gratify herself twice, I took
the

the brocade my sister had relinquished,
though in my judgment it was the more
odious thing of them all.

We made shift at length to halve them,
though I was so dissatisfied with mine, as
to think the worst of my sister's, superior
to the best of my own.

I shall not run through our division of
the other articles, as quilted coats, hoops,
linen, head-gear, handkerchiefs, and
vast variety of other things; but shall
leave them under this remark, that I w
almost raving for all that my sister ha
made her property, and equally detest
my own; insomuch, that when we h
concluded, my mamma taking notice
that she was sure by my looks I was di
pleased at somewhat; I replied, that a
might as well receive nothing at all,
not what one had a fancy for.

Why pray, said she, what part of yo
sister's choice is it that has given you t
disturbance? No, no, let her keep
said I, the time may come when I sh
be permitted to please myself from varie
without controul.

Prithee make not thyself uneasy at tha
said mamma, for possibly your sister, wh
places not that value upon trifles as yo
do, may be willing to exchange wi
yo

had done but much prejudice to her own
honour, or at least upon some little thing
which they may want, thrown into the bar-
gain. With all my heart, said my sister,
would I give up much at one to me which I have ; let
her take which she pleases, giving me the
choice of hers in the lieu of it.

At first, I was ashamed of my own
indulgence, but my passion overpowering my
sense of shame, I could not refrain from be-
ing the mistress of the suit she had first
offered me ; when in the room of it she took
out of a pink coloured damask, which
she insisted to be worth two of
mine, so that I should certainly, but for
my shame, have returned it.

I had too often been my fate through
the want of warmth of my temper, and too
easily given up a pursuit of my present inclina-
tions, to repent at leisure what I had
done ; precipitated myself into ; whereas
my sister, from a seeming carelessness in
her behaviour as to things indifferent ;
a thorough deliberation upon matters
of consequence, and a thoughtful
temper, most peculiar to her, scarce ever
negligently transacted the least article that
was either in future repeated or was ashamed

We

We had been so long in parcelling out and appropriating our several moveables ; that it now growing candle-light, my mamma would not suffer the little box to be opened till the next morning ; and then, so soon as breakfast should be over, she said, we should enquire into the contents of it : so that now our sole business was, and enough of it we had, to convey off, and dispose of our finery.

The apparatus for my new habiliments, and the manner I should cause them severally to be made up in, had taken such possession of my brains, that I could no more have composed myself for sleeping all night, than if I had lain between decks in a sea engagement, whilst the cannon had all been firing about my ears : for after I had pretty well adjusted my caparisons, in the manner most suitable to my inclination, with regard to my stature, bulk, and complexion ; as if beholding myself already set out with them, I began to make an estimate of my person according to the value my father had rated me at : when the first thing that took stand in my mind long enough to form itself into a fixed resolve was, that my present lover was altogether unworthy of me, and that therefore I might highly injure my character

Per amongst men of more exalted station in life, with whom alone it would become me to have future intercourse, should I give him the least farther encouragement. In consequence whereof I either resolved at his next approach to give him his final dismissal.

The next thing that fancy started, and pursued throughout all its windings till I had fixed it as a matter of absolute necessity, was, that though I was a woman now, and fully capable to manage myself, and the disposal of my fortune, yet still I should remain harboured under the wing of, and in the house of my parents, I should but be esteemed as a child, minor, and acting solely under the direction, influence, and nod of a superior, which I looked upon as an indignity, ill fitting a lady of my age, knowledge in, and opulence: so that I farther resolved, either by letter to my father in his absence, or so soon as he shall be returned, apply to him for the assignment of my portion, that I might release him from all their concern for my maintenance; and being myself to my own liking, have the immediate enjoyment of my income, for support of such an equipage as I should fit.

I had

I had scarce adjusted these particulars in manner and form before my sister awaking, and entring into discourse with me, perceived there would be no farther proceeding with my schemes till I should be up and have discharged myself of her troublesome society ; when I purposed to carry on my reflections to various other articles but now the mantua-maker was to be sent for instructions and counsel upon my gowns and petticoats. I was to take a journey of nine miles to Gloucester, to my milliner, for the making up of such a collection of caps, hoods, handkerchiefs shifts, tuckers, &c. that when I should enjoy another spare moment from the interruption of these and like operators, was uncertain : so that I was compelled to postpone all farther debate upon those affairs till I should be somehow settled again.

At the time appointed, my mamma brought down the little box, and in the presence of myself and sister opened it when the first things that presented were three bank notes, for an hundred pounds each, each with one of our names indorsed upon it.

My mamma presented each of us with one, and kept the third herself, and my sister taking out her pocket-book, after carefull

carefully folding up her note, and depositing it therein, put all into her pocket again ; but my heart, after so fair a beginning, was so intent upon what was to succeed, that whispering up the paper in my hand, I thrust it loose into my pocket, whilst my eye sparkled at sight of two or three little shagreen boxes, that now presented themselves after the removal of a blank paper, and some wool, that had been covered them.

My mamma took them out one by one, though my fingers itched to be handling them ; then opening, and remarking on them severally, the first produced to three diamond rings, which I longed to get out, that I might place them severally upon my fingers, the better to judge their beauties upon my own hand ; but my mamma objected to, as they would be much more conspicuous, said, in the black foil they were set in. My delight was considerably diminished from the restraint I was under from trying them as I pleased ; and so I told mamma, but she insisted, that as we could not be certain, they appeared at present more beauty than possibly we might behold them again in after handling or fouling them by our fingers or breaths ;

breaths ; we should forthwith proceed to our choice whilst they still remained in the case ; and that, as it would be immaterial to her, which of them should fall to her wear, she would permit us to please ourselves in the first place, and then content herself with our leavings.

I could not from any acuteness of my own skill, discover the least superiority in either of them upon every remark I could make upon them ; but yet could not wave the condemnation of my own fate, that had substituted me by two years my sister's junior, which would now afford her the preference in the election : nor whilst she was viewing them could I forbear to watch her eyes as they moved from one to the other ; still placing my esteem upon that which she seemed to mark out for her favourite ; till at length having followed her eye in the survey of each of them, over and over, darting her hand at the box, this, said she, is the jewel for my money, and took one.

Though I as yet knew not perfectly which of the three she intended, my heart fluttered so at the seizure, as if all that remained were of no value ; nor after she had extracted hers from the case, could I judge either of the others worthy of a contest ;

test : so that under an almost total dispiritedness, I drew one of the other, as a trifle to me after her election had passed.

But now, mamma laying aside the third, with the box for herself, a second case was drawn out and exposed to us ; the lading whereof, consisted only of two pair of ear-rings. My restless spirit, which would rather create than not find a sufficient cause to quarrel at, put me upon tossing up my head, with a so, I presume, I am now to have never a pair of ear-rings ; for as here are but two of them, one need to be no conjurer to guess to whom they must belong. The younger must be the sufferer, poor girl, no doubt, all's well if her elder sister can appear like a lady.—I know not who first had a right to make customs, added I, that should for ever oblige their successors ; nor can I see, why we at this day have not as legal an authority to abolish as they had to establish, especially things so opposite to reason, justice and nature : for surely ! if any preference in finery or gaiety is to be given at all between sisters, it ought to attend the younger ; as more apt to be taken with any thing showy than her seniors, whose solidity of judgment should rather disengage them from such

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vanities — but I suppose, I must submit to old rules and go without ; priding myself only in that I have the honour to be sister to a fine lady, who, when better provided for herself, may probably, if I behave well, present her cast trumpery to me.

I can't imagine, Molly, said my mamma, to what end all this idle tale is delivered to us, savy either to denote your own eloquence, or to interrupt us in our farther proceedings. Why ? Are there not here two pair, one for your sister, the other for yourself ? What would the girl have — But thy peevish and dissatisfied humour, will one day or other be the bane of you.

You are sensible I wanted no ear-rings, added mamma, having a much finer pair of my own already than these are ; then pray speak when you are spoken to ; but let not your impertinence out-run your wisdom. Never was creature so abashed as myself at this juncture : for how was it possible for me to forget, that mamma scarce ever dressed to any purpose, but she wore them ; so that let things go how they would for the future, I was determined to hold my tongue, and not to suffer such another snubbing.

In

In short, we chose our ear-rings, a pair of buckles each, and several other things ; when now came on the grand contest, which in my mind proved a matter of more consequence than all that had gone before it ; for mamma having removed a parcel of cotton, displayed to us two gold chased watches, which she told us were all our own ; she having one already that she valued beyond any new one.

There being no visible difference between them, my sister was not long framing her mind to a choice : so that taking one of them at a venture, she first wound it up, then setting it to the hour by my mamma's, hung it on to her side ; as also I did mine soon after her.

The trinkets being now all disposed of, and my mamma retired to her chamber ; we fell into chat upon them directly. I praised my good hap in the watch, as the very same falling to my lot, that I had set my heart upon : for I told my sister, that though she had not seemed to observe it, the part to which her chain was hung, I believed to be unrivitted, or else it was made too long, so that I never in any thing make such an ungain appearance in my life.

She looked upon it, compared it with mine, and at length agreed, that mine looked the most compact ; but, however, it was all one to her, she had taken, and must retain it, she said.

From this we went to other topicks, and began to compare our ear-rings ; when both starting, we were amazed above measure, at hearing my sister's watch plainly strike eleven o'clock : for neither of us had ever heard a watch strike before.

I took up my own instantly, when finding it to want near a minute of eleven, I delighted myself exceedingly, in that I should so soon hear my own strike too, it being the prettiest fancy imaginable, I said, whereby one might know the hour of the night in the dark ; and declared, I would constantly hang mine over my head for that purpose.

I was still looking and watching for its striking, till the minute-hand pointing to eleven ; now, now, sister, said I, observe mine, and take notice which has the best sound. I kept looking still, till the hand had gained another minute, and then another ; nor had I never withdrawn my eyes, had I ever heard my watch strike, which put me into an intolerable perplexity.

Sure

Surely I sister, said I, my watch has received some damage or other in coming, that has prevented its telling the hour; and should I put it into the hands of any country workman, he may damage it farther; my things, added I, never suit so well as other peoples; that is my constant misfortune; but I'll go to mamma directly, and possibly she may find out the meaning of it: so away I went in a perfect agony for fear that any thing in my watch was broken, which I thought would break my heart.

C H A P. VIII.

Watch adventure continued. Polly's lover silences her with a snuff-box. Polly loses a bank note. Her soliloquy. Returns the snuff-box, and dismisses her lover. The torment of ambitious imaginations. Polly's reflections on her sister's gravity. Polly's way of life. The world's character of her. Her thoughts of marriage.

MY mamma happened to be locked into her room, when I went, being

ing busy upon some private affairs; but that would not permit my laying open my complaint, and begging her advice and assistance; though she made so light of it as to refer me to after dinner, when she should be at leisure for what I should have to offer.

Being half distracted at this disappointment I retreated to my own room; where after venting my concern in private, I thought fit to examine into the cause of my discomposure by myself: for which purpose I first took off the case of the watch, then laid the movements bare; when it ticked, to my thinking, as well as watch could do:

I then suspecting that I had not wound it far enough to make it strike, applied my key to it again, and proceeded to force it higher; when such a snap and whizze assaulted my ears, that I then believed I had gained my point; but turning it about to look when I might expect to hear the strokes; it was then altogether silent, nor made it the least sound in nature.

What was now to be done I was ignorant, but as I had scarce turned it one round before, I thought to commence the same effort again to see what effect that might

might have. I began as at first ; when finding the key to move so easily, I disputed not but all would be soon well again ; and on I went till my hand was quite weary of the exercise, nor had I ceased again before that was as silent as before.

Apprehending then that some more judicious hand than my own must have the management of it, I desisted from farther experiments, and hooked it again to my side till mamma should set it in order for me. I began upon it the moment that grace was said ; but mamma desired that she might eat her dinner at peace.—Did I see my sister make such a to do with her watch ? — She could not think what was come to me ; but I was ever under some difficulty.

The cloth being now removed, mamma told me, she would hear what I had to say bout my watch ; (but if she had not spoke st, I had resolved never more to have mentioned it to her I was so vexed, though I had ever after proved useless to me :) so I told her I could not make it strike like my ster's ; nor indeed, since I had wound it up again could I make it tick at all, nor could either of the hands move, unless when I turned them with my finger.

Mamma then putting on a most judicious air, give it me, said she. — You have play'd some fool's trick with it, I suppose; but opening the inmost shell; why the chain is broke, said she. Don't you see it here staring amongst the wheels? I should be greatly obliged to you, madam, to mend it for me, said I. No, no, that's past my skill, said she; you must send it to the watch-maker, he is the only person for such jobbs, and I suppose he may charge you a crown or more for it.

Being but too sensible from what was apparent, that mamma was in the right, I dispatched one of our men to Gloucester, with a charge to the operator for rectifying all that was amiss, and to make it perfect in every shape whatever, and to bring it me over the next day, when I would pay him for it: but though I expected it again so soon, I could not forbear to envy my sister's happiness, whenever her watch either struck, or I observed her to look into the time by it, and heartily wished I for the next day, that I might find myself once more upon a par with her.

It was on the third day that the man brought it me, and was shewn with it into the parlour to us. He demanded half a guinea for his trouble; but then assured me,

me, it would go as well as any watch in England. This last found was so grateful to me, that I grudged him no part of his money, I said, provided he had but made it to strike freely.

Strike! madam, replied the workman, that watch was never designed for a repeater. Why? it contains not a single movement for that purpose.

Nay, said I, that's very strange indeed! why? my sister's strikes, and they are both of the same make. If the young lady pleases to favour me with a sight of hers, I can soon satisfy you of that, madam, said he.

My sister then handing hers to him, he pronounced it a repeater, without opening its case at all. How is it possible, said I, that you can know that, but by a view of its outward parts? Very easily, he said, and then squeezing the long neck I had condemned so; this, madam, added he, denotes it a striking watch, you may observe your own to want; the watch striking t the same time; well! said I, but it strikes wrong, for the hand is past the hour. Then pressing it again with his thumb, and it striking again; madam, said he, it will do this all day was I to press ; always repeating the hour that is last

passed ; but this, yours was not made, to do.

A feather would have felled me to the earth upon hearing of this report ; but not to shew my simplicity before the stranger, I desired mamma to lend me half a guinea to pay him with, as I supposed he could not change a bank note ; at which he smiling, I paid him, and away he went.

Silence having been for some time maintained between us, whilst I sat in unexpressible torment ; at length, madam, said I to my mamma, you have often accused me of being too violent in my pursuits, and condemned what you have called the starts of my passion ; but had this frown of fortune but happened to yourself, I greatly question, whether you would have received it with much more composure than I have. Can you say, to call it by no severer a name, that it is not the most unaccountable ill luck that ever befel a young lady of my years, that she should arrive within a thought of so much more estimable a piece of furniture as my sister's is over mine, and yet to be so unfortunate to miss it, and be obliged to take up with one in every degree so inferior to it ? Let me tell you, madam, added I, a less unfair

air than this would turn some young wome-
mens brains.

I can't say so, said my mother, your father sent you both these things, and very good they are of their several sorts; but as one must needs cost much more than the other; though he might chuse you should see such a thing, yet he might imagine another of the same might be too expensive; and let me tell you, few ladies in this country can produce a better than your own. Now, as there was but one of them, your sister by seniority became intitled to it; then wher are you damni-fied, in having what must be designed you by your father?

I protest, madam, said my sister, I took what I now have by accident only; nor had the least apprehension of their values being any ways unequal. Nay, so far would my sister have been from electing mine, had the precedent choice been her own, that she found particular fault with the very thing from whence it receives its excellency; so that she herself preferred her own to mine: but as fortune has thrown into my hands, a machine confessedly more excellent than hers; she must excuse me, if I consent not to an exchange with her in

in this, though I humoured her before in the gown.

Having nothing now but patience to comfort myself with, and so slight a portion of that having fallen to my lot, never poor girl laboured under more excruciating perplexities than I did, till gaining not the least relief from them, I was at length compelled to chear myself upon the thought, that the time might not be long, before I might be able from my own stock to furnish myself out better than my sister ; and this I was determined to do the very first opportunity.

At the next visit my new admirer made me, he drew out a charming gold snuff-box, the rim of which was set round with diamonds, and in the lid of it his own picture, so exquisitely performed, as that the man seemed really to live in it.

This, he begging leave to present me with, so blinded my eyes with its brightness, and proved so infallible a padlock upon my tongue ; as, notwithstanding all my prior resolutions for his rejection, to suppress every the least sentiments of mine to his prejudice : so that accepting of his favour, though far more to outvy with my sister than for its utility to me ; after a reasonable

reasonable time passed together; in the display of his affection for me, he left me, thought, more yielding than at his last

A few days now brought us in such a range of new habiliments, as obliged us to think of turning our paper into cash, discharge of the bills that were poured upon us; and having agreed to apply the receiver of the land-tax, scarce any else being capable of supplying both occasions; my mamma had wrote a note to that gentleman, to desire the favour of him to send us the money, for notes that she was to inclose in it by her servant; but the letter being ready, my sister having produced her note to the purpose, what was become of mine, ther I, nor any one else could give the account.

My sister remembered my putting it in my pocket; she said, at the time of depositing hers in her pocket-book; what might become of it afterwards is ignorant. I had also some notion of leaving it there; but that I had ever on any occasion extracted it thence, I no recollection at all: so that having searched all my drawers, and wherever I could conceive it likely I could have laid

laid it without the least effect ; I concluded, I must have drawn it forth with my handkerchief, and so have dropt it, I know not where ; or that taking it for waste paper, I had employed it to some unworthy purpose : but no sooner had I given it over for lost, than I verily thought I should have run distracted.

I locked myself into my chamber, where I wept, and sobbed so, as to be remarked by all the servants in the house for it. O ! said I, that ever I, who have upon all occasions looked downwards upon my sister, as one wanting the spirit and vivacity that I enjoyed ; that I, who have in my own heart condemned almost every action of her life, as beneath the degree of a woman of that fortune and rank we must one day bear in the world, should by forming the comparison between us impartially be reduced to confess, that every of her actions being blameless, she has prospered in them all accordingly ; whilst I, whose behaviour has, as near as is possible, opposed hers, have suffered nothing but adversity in every my undertakings.

Had but I been as careful as my sister, I might now have been able to have discharged all demands upon me, with as considerable a surplus for future occasions

she will have; but must now confess to the owning an obligation for the money to mamma; if yet, she will see fit credit me with it; and then subsist without a penny in my pocket whilst my sister will be daily making new purchases.

had for the instant, whilst my sorrow so gauling upon me, as mean an opinion of myself as possible, and as exalted notions of my sister's conduct; even till I had determined to establish her actions as patterns for my future imitation; but let say, that my resolution in this case died of any long continuance: for after I had received some severe reprimands from mamma for my negligence, rather than I should incur the scandal of inability to pay my bills, she advanced me the money for them; but would disburse not a penny more to me upon any account whatever.

My new snuff-box, which had delighted me for a few days, growing now but a common utensil, and my daily change of superb dresses, recalling my late resolution looking above my present admirer; next time he addressed himself to me, which happened in a few days after, turned him his box again, and being sorry

disposing myself for company : insomuc
that I have frequently esteemed her even ■
unworthy of all relationship to the f
mily ; and have even condemned pro
vidence for not suiting our capacities to our ■
fortunes ; being firmly persuaded, th
like a monstrous birth, it was for so
defect or other in its management of t
world, that riches should be cloſſetted
in ſuch despicable hands as accompani
not a noble ſpirit to make uſe of them ;
and many a time would I ſay to myſelf,
what an impropriety it was, that fathers
from cuſtom ſhould make all their daugh
ters equally to ſhare their wealth, w
perhaps only one in the bunch was cut
for ſhining in life with her ſhare, and
paſſing it for the benefit of the com
nity, and her own grandeur ; whiſt
reſidue conſined it from all communi
tion with others, like meer dirt and v
leſs lumber. Had I been a parent, I ha
often thought, I would have forced
way through ſuſh an uſage, by contrai
ng my favours to the undeferving wretc
that I might the more aggrandize the l
beral and generous hearted.

In ſhort, I ſcarce ever ſaw home but i
the night : for not an assembly would b
held, a race run, or any public meeting
whatſoeve

ins, as scarce to afford myself the gene-recruits of nature; nor could I have still, or released myself for a few hours in my reflections on them, might I e been made queen of England: so ; I have many a times since thought, no drudgery whatever can be more vexing than the anxiety of a giddy, leat person, for means of employment, ie excesses a vain imagination craves worthy him or her to ; but having then pare time for serious considerations, I id only where, when, and how to get myself into some party or other ; so my spirits being ever upon the all care, either for my present or state being cast aside, I might lay away my time insignificantly.

is incredible with what scorn I look upon upon my sister; to whom few ny practices were agreeable ; when deing into the parlour, dressed like any bess, and my coach waiting at the for me, to carry me I scarce knew her ; I have found her there in her gown, neglectful of my drapery, if she sat making up a cap, or hemm'd an old handkercheif, or apron ; or, her times to find her dull enough to sked-up upon her knees, whilst I was disposing

Having rendered myself so very scarce a day passed that I received no letter, from some one or more of my companions, inviting me to the connate state ; some of which proclaimed disinterested principles in their authors that having so much of their own, to render them little anxious after my wealth, they coveted in life being a lady of my accomplishments ; they should place the sole happiness in me, let my fortune what it would ; and unconditionally sought me to crown their felicity by consent ; nor have I the least reason to scruple their proving as good as they promised ; but my views, since father's letter had inspired me with conceit, were become so fixed upon quality, that had the most opulent commerce upon earth paid his addresses to me, I should have overlooked him for sake of title I aspired to : so that though a number of suitors, to neither of whom I gave discouragement, were the most delectable for my vanity ; yet on my part they had nothing to hope but my soci

C H A P. IX.

Polly diverted from a golden dream.
The company she met below. Her unnatural suggestions. Officers take possession of the house and goods. Horrid spectacle. Obliged all to remove to an inn. Mr. Wrotbless visits them there. His generous offers. An execution in Mr. Smell's house. Polly discredits it. All retrieve to Mr. Wrotbless's.

EAR three weeks had now passed without any letter from my father : that we hoped he would be near his return to inform us of his successes himself ; and I was daily calculating from his former account of things, what I might expect him to appropriate to me as my dividend : nay, had almost lost myself one in pursuit of such and such measures, I purposed to take in case it should turn out so much, and what alterations I might best introduce to my scheme in case it proved so much more ; when mamma sent for me down in all haste into the parlour

Had

Had it not been mamma that had ordered it, I would have wished some mischief to the messenger, for the interruption she had given to the most pleasing resverie that I ever in my life had enjoyed before ; but the thread of my contemplation being now snapped, I replied, I would come presently ; when not knowing but some company might wait to receive me there, I stayed just to equip myself fit to be seen before I descended to her.

The first persons who presented to me upon turning the lock, were a good gentleman like young man, and two as looking fellows as my eyes ever beheld, sitting near to the door way ; when passing them by, I moved forwards to mamma, who together with my sister, were such a flood of tears, as incapacitated them from any reply to my demand of what mamma would please to have with me ?

I was greatly surprized at this melancholly spectacle ; but however, I sat me down by them, in hopes of the mitigation of their sorrow so soon as it had spent itself a little.

My fancy immediately struck me, that my father was either dangerously ill or dead, and that the strangers, by their gravity, were the bearers of this news to

the

the afflicted ladies; but instead of falling into their measures, my heart could not forbear exulting prodigiously at the hopes of being now sole mistress of my own fortune, and freed from the restraint of parents, when I might give a loose to my desires, and swallow in uncontrolled delights.

I had not long indulged over these speculations, before the best dressed of the strangers rising, and approaching my mamma, madam, said he, my time is very precious, and the day wears apace, I must beg you to take order for your departure. So, thinks I, then we are all to go to London for mourning, and to attend my brother's funeral; for the above speech confirmed his death to me; till proceeding, A lady of your fashion, madam, added though not already provided of conveniences, need not doubt them amongst neighbouring gentry, till you can better accommodate yourself to your own mind. Sorry I am to be compelled to be importunate; but I have many miles to ride, and must deliver possession to the sons I have brought with me, and give them to retain it before I go.

Instead of the answer he expected to his speech, this had but cast mamma and sister

into more violent agitations, and a fresh flux of weeping; till after some short time taken for the recovery of her spirits, this, said mamma, is very short warning indeed, sir. Why has my husband sent me no notice of it? — Is it to be supposed, that I and my children can lie in the streets? — Where can we find accommodations in an hour or two's time? — Nay, if we could, is it to be imagined that we can remove our goods, cloth and furniture, in the space you seem to allot us?

I am amazed, said the lawyer, (as after found him to be) that Mr. Smith has not apprized you yet, that both estate and goods are my client's. Madam added he, neither stick or stone, utensil piece of furniture, are to be conveyed away by you, or any thing whatsoever, the wearing apparel of yourself a family.

My sister then desiring to know who it was that had purchased the house and things; the lawyer replied, it was Mr. Funwell, a very worthy gentleman from London. Dear madam, said I, what need is there for making so many words of it? You very well knew, my father has sold the estate, and since it is to Mr. Funwell

Funwell, you need not doubt but my father is well paid for it ; then, what is it to us, whether my father retains the estate or the money ? He will return loaden enough to purchase a far better if he pleases, and to new furnish it in a more superb taste too, than with the like old trumpery that ours abounds with.

This giving mamma a little heart, though my sister still wept bitterly ; she began to recollect herself, and told the lawyer, that if she must depart, she must ; and would give him no farther trouble.

I then desiring to know, whether he came lately from London, he replied, directly. Do you know my father ? Sir, said I ? Very well, he said by some little business he had transacted between him and Mr. Funwell. I hoped, I said, that was well. He presumed so, he said.

Having then finished my catechising, I desired my mamma to think where should bestow ourselves that night till night look out for some suitable habitation the next day, to remain at till my brother's arrival ; but neither of us could conclude upon any place, save an inn that near us, which we imagined to be more eligible than a removal to any friend's house ; where besides the discom-

posure we might give to the family, surmises might be started to our prejudice : so that packing up our clothes in bundles, for we were not permitted to take away so much as a deal box, or trunk, for their repository; one of us proposed to go with the first coach load, to take care of them at the inn, while the others were packing up to follow ; but upon ordering out the coach for our purpose, we were assured, that it would not be granted us, it being more, the lawyer said, than he could justify.

This was such a blow as we could not have expected ; nor would it be possible for us to go without it, we said ; but his negative soon silenced us ; though my mamma said, she wondered how my father could think of parting with that.

The lawyer was about to have said some thing, when I, impatient to be gone, (as judging every step we took to a removal, would be setting me on my way towards my expected haven) replied, that most certain it was, my father made little account of our old coach, having so much a finer in town, wherein he was to return with a set of horses ; and for ought we knew, he might then be upon his way to us with it.

This

This again comforting mamma a little, she begg'd the gentleman to lend her the coach, which she should take as a great favour, it being scarce more than a mile to the inn, though a walk too far abundantly for her undertaking at that time.

The lawyer hesitating at this, and hinting, that when the coach should be out of his custody, the driver might disappoint him by not returning it; one of the fellows, who had stood mute all this while, replied, that if he pleased, he would take upon him to conduct the ladies to the inn, he very well understanding to drive, and would safely re-deliver the coach again.

This salvo, being at length accepted, we were transported at twice to the inn, having taken our final leave of a dwelling it had been for some generations in our family.

We seemed for that night to be under more composure ourselves than any one in our neighbourhood; for though suspected this remove to be only from ill to better; yet before bed-time, noise in the place but had given our execution the right name of an execution; such running from one hand to another, a fire amongst dry stubble, had reached Wrothleff's ears that evening; whilst

we took all that had happened to be in consequence of the sale.

Our fatigue over night had kept longer in our beds than usual the morning, so that we breakfasted not fore eleven o'clock; in the height which meal, Mr. Wrothless sent up name, as desirous of speaking with mamma. Our conversation seemed at a profound stand upon the receipt of this message. I cried out, dear mamma, can't receive him here, bless me! I was never in such a dishabille in my days. What can he want with you at this time o' th' day? Why, sister, you can stand it no more than I.—It matters not so much for my mother's dress.—Let us quit the room before he comes.

Prithee! child, said my sister, did you never see a man before? Not in this unoward pickle, said I, nor shall I now chuse it.—Then e'en take yourself out of the room, said my sister, and if he likes me not, he may look another way. Na sister, said I, if you are so little concerned at being seen by a gentleman who visit can but be to yourself, I have cause for disturbance: so running to glass and strumming things about me in disorder she time would allow; man ha

having desired he would walk up, I seated myself with them at the breakfast table.

Mr. Wrothless being shewn into us, and desired to be seated, a silence ensued for some minutes; whilst it appeared most visible to us all, that somewhat hung very heavily on his brow; but what, we could noways imagine; till at length, madam, said he, (with the tears stealing involuntarily down his cheeks) pardon me for this intrusion upon your privacy; but the horror I conceived at the report of your being obliged to leave your family seat last night, has so sunk me, that I could by no means dispense with this testimony of my duty for enquiring into the truth of it; not only as my neighbours in general, for whom I have a more than ordinary regard; but peculiarly, for the sake of that lady, looking at my sister, who can in no respect prove a sufferer, without equally affecting me with herself.

I hope, madam, added he to mamma, you will excuse what I came hither to offer you; that in case Mr. Sm—ell's affairs are not irretrievable, he will seek no other than into my purse for redress, where he shall meet with as hearty a wel-

done as my own father, to command whatever he pleases.

Permit me still farther, fair lady, said he to my sister, to desire you to suffer no dejection upon account of whatever may have befallen your father; since that penny I enjoy not in the world, whereof you may not command the moiety. You are sensible miss, added he, that my passion has been long confined to you alone, and that whilst you pleased not to admit me to a closer union with you, I have contented myself above measure in your conversation. My affection miss, has been solely to your person and amiable qualities; your fortune, the most remote from my cogitations of any one thing whatever; nor shall any disappointment to befall you in life ever diminish my too firmly established esteem for you: so that though you should be reduced to a single petticoat, you shall never be less pleasing in my eye, or acceptable to my person, than if you was mistress of the whole globe. Wherefore, if all that I am possessed of in the world, can tempt you to accept of my very indifferent self, I submit to such terms as your discretion shall please to impose upon me.

My spirit was ready to dart forth at my eyes, whilst he was measuring out his tedious

tedious preamble; till having concluded with a bow to my sister, and neither my mamma or she, readily replying to him, as I could no longer with-hold my tongue from its office, I suppose sir, said I, that by our quitting our house to a stranger last night, some defamatory tongues have spread a report, that we were compelled to it, as they imagined by debts due from my father; but surely sir, our case is the very reverse.

I doubt not, added I, but you know what practices have started for getting money at London. I have heard of them, this, replied he. Now sir, added I, it was in order for an opportunity the better to advance his family, that my father dispossessed himself of his estate; that by the way arising therefrom, he might prosecute his good fortune to a vast increase. Now continued I, my papa having prospered his enterprize, he sent us word, by the last letter he wrote us, that my sister, I were an hundred thousand pounds, unes each of us: so that the world must greatly deceived in my father's wealth, can by this time purchase many such estates as he has lately sold from the fa-

I wish from my heart it may prove said Mr. Wrothless ; but if I am truly formed, many a man who has rā his thousands, and even tens of thousa last week, may be glad to submit to : thing for bread this week ; nor inde without some grounds, had I dared to h ventured so far as I have gone ; but author may not be infallible, and I ho it is otherwise , for that, in no one case life should I rejoice more to find n mistaken than in this.

I was beginning to convince him was so by many and infallible argume as I presumed ; when mamma taking discourse our of my hands, begg'd le to know from whom he received his famous intelligence.

Madam, replied he, what I have be fore mentioned, reaching my ear la night, my esteem for your family, wou admit me to no rest, till as far as I shou be able, I had convinced myself of truth or falsehood.

This carried me to your late ho where I found only two strangers, wh upon farther enquiry I perceived to bailiffs, who had brought an execu into your house, and were then keep possession.

I soon engaged in such familiarity with them, that under favour of some little present I made them for their trouble of shewing me the house, to which I presented myself a stranger, I extracted this account from them; that the plaintiff having engaged the squire, as the fellow called him, in the bubbles, too deeply for his ready money to answer, had obtained not only a conveyance of all his estate, but a judgment also, in order to cover every of his personal effects, and that the estate, as the attorney told them, having been for some time before conveyed to the plaintiff, they were then holding all the goods in execution for the remainder of the money. They said, they were informed, that there were several contracts for the bubbles still unsatisfied, for which they expected the squire would be prosecuted, and possibly land in a goal, if they were not somehow protracted made up very speedily.

Now, judge you, madam, said Mr. Wrotchlefs, whether having an affection for this lady, I had not all the cause in the world to apply myself to you and her, than offer of the little service I might be able to perform for the family?

My sister had wept like a child for the sake of his whole relation. My mamma

was so thunder-struck, as scarce to know what, either to say, or think ; but my courage still holding out against all delusions, as I turned them, (for could I but once have given credit to a tythe of what he had offered, I should have been ten times more disengaged than either of them, and might probably have gone quite raving mad) I insisted, that he had been grossly imposed upon, and that the scrubs his authors, must have had some private view in his deception : so that railing at my sister and mamma for their dispiritedness, upon a report hatched in a corner, without the least circumstance corroborating it, save their having an execution, which they might only make pretence of for bye ends to themselves, and to save their being laid by the heels for what they were about ; I professed my resolution for not varying my former opinion of the affair till I should receive cause from my father's own mouth. Besides, madam, said I, what Mr. Wrothless speaks of relates only to the bubbles, as he calls them ; and, supposing all these cast out of the scale, yet my father's South Sea stock, which he said was to be sold at a thousand, will produce enough, not only for his and your own genteel subsistence, but to establish both

both my sister and me in ample for-
tress.

Mamma laying fast hold of this, it was
evident she said; and as masters could not
at such distance be collected with certainty,
she would hope the best, and wait for my
father's return, for her better informa-
tion; but she returned all possible thanks
to Mr. Wrothleſs, for the kind offers he
had made, both to herself and her daugh-
ter, assuring him, that she should thence-
forth esteem herself under the strictest
obligation, to render him every service in
her power with her daughter, since his
declaration to her, had convinced
her, that no other man could be worthy
her.

Mr. Wrothleſs acknowledged the fa-
ir-intended him, was an over payment
whatever he could do for the family;
but treated mamma to urge nothing to
persuade, inconsistent with her free incli-
tion; for that compulsion, in matters of
such was more odious to him than his
own disappointment; but acknowledged,
& could be himself but find the way to
his sister's heart, the grand business of his
life, would but center in the completion
of her felicity, by every means in his
power; to which my sister replied, that
since

since what had that day passed between them, himself would prove his own best advocate with her.

He then asked mamma, how she design'd to dispose of herself and us till my father's return ? To which she replying, uncertainly ; but adding, that she intended to seek out for a lodging only till she should hear from or see my father ; he begg'd to have the recommending of one to her, where he would answer for it, she should be accommodated to her satisfaction.

Dear sir, said mamma, you have given great life to my hopes indeed ; for I feared, I should have had a weighty task upon my hands, and have spent no few days in the acquirement ; but pray please to inform me, where you purpose we should be, that I may send one, or both of my daughters, to see how it will suit us ? For as these fellows have taken possession of my coach, I am not able to sustain myself under so tedious an exercise, as of searching for another, in case that you recommend should be disagreeable.

He replied, that his own, being generally esteemed the best house in all the county, and where he hoped mamma would judge herself at home, it would be

ghest indignity that she could offer should she raise the least difficulty use of it, for herself and family, long time as it would be agreeable ; adding, that if she pleased, his should carry us all home with him. you hear ? children, said mamma ; after replying, as she pleased, I could less too ; so that having again re- some of our things that had ken out for instant wear, we took them with us, as might be con- ly carried by the coach, and our s took charge of the rest, to bring fter us.



C H A P. X.

*The sisters debate on Mr. Wrotbless.
Miss Letitia yields to Mr. Wrotbless.
Are married. Letter from Mr.
Sm---ell. Mrs. Sm---ell interrupt-
ed by tears. Polly's exposition. Ten-
der scene of Mr. Wrotbless and his
lady.*

FROM the moment of our entering Mr. Wrotbless's doors, my mamma and sister, employed most of their time in extolling of his generosity and goodness to us : for that never would poor creatures have been at a greater nonplus than ourselves, had we been driven to take up with some pauptry apartment, with merely the bare necessities of life about us.

I told my sister, that it was plainly for her sake, that we fared so well ; since Mr. Wrotbless now having her to himself, need not fear, under the obligation we all stood bound to him in, of plying her so warmly, as to carry his point at last : for I presumed, that he would

would scarce ever be absent from her, and asked her, how she purposed to behave? for that whilst we should be under his roof, it would be impolitic to carry it rudely to him.

"My dear," said she, "could I but have the least room to suspect Mr. Wrothlefs of harbouring the vile sordid principles you abound with, I should instantly fly his house, and more eligibly secure my self in the meanest cottage in the country, subject to their manner of living, than participate of the magnificence of his habitation; but neither has this gentleman any of those selfish views you impute to him, nor find I the least reason, from any part of his past conduct, to conceive so.

"Did he not offer to relieve my Father, if fallen into the distress he supposed? Did he not propose to accept of me, as unreservedly without, as ever he before did with a fortune? that he loves me, I make no question, and that I ought to return him every satisfaction in my power, I make as little; but yet, could I conceive, that his invitation hither was, to impose a consent to his desires upon me, by way of duty or gratitude, for the favours he now indiscriminately dis-

dispenses to us all, I should abominate him.

I asked her, if she had any design to become his wife? adding, that by what she had said, it should seem so to me. She replied, she had; and that unless any thing arising from himself should interpose to its prevention, she would be so too.

Well! sister, said I, little did I ever expect I should live to see that day, after the contempt you have beheld him with as a lover, and the many corporal defects, you have stigmatized him for; b
I see there is nothing to be depended upon in this life.

Would I, at your age, conjoin myself to a complication of distempers, when my fortune would intitle me to election to my taste, among the whole world? What juades must be conveyed to your offspring from him? he unhealthy, how miserable may they all their days, owing solely to the piece of folly, of your producing them from such a cankered and unsound a stock?

You seem to have made a true judgment, sister, replied she, that nothing is to be depended upon in this life; nor indeed, have I been obliged to submit but to a few things, which I, in time past, held

held in detestation. Were it not for the disappointments of our own resolvs, that are obtruded upon us by external force, or from an unaccountable mutation in our own opinions, we might suspect that we sat superior in nature, to all controul of its supreme governor: nay, might be vain enough to deem our selves governors of it; but these crosses to our purposes, are wisely interjected, to convince us, that they can stand firm no longer; than whilst the ruler of all our projects, permits them.

Shew me an unexceptionable man in human nature, added she, and I will then admit your argument to be valid, against the worn-out nature and infirmities of Mr. Wrothleſs. The vigorous young gentleman, may be, what Mr. Wrothleſs has been; and then he decays upon your hands, with equal hazard to posterity, and probably, from more dangerous sources too; for the worst that has ever been ascribed to this gentleman, has been his love to his bottle, and late hours.

The picture of a man, added she, with every of his limbs penciled, his countenance florid, and as a robust constitution as uninterrupted health, can form it,

it, may be passionate, ill-natured, and from the adoration he may pay to his own sweet person, contemn you, as of a degree of creatures, inferior to his species.

How many faults maybe found in man? so many, or at least some of them may; nay must fall to the share of every man; added she, any one of which intenserately prosecuted, is sufficient to denounce a wife miserable; nor can the woman that weds, expect to escape the effects of them.

What fault can you find with Mr. Wrothlefs, said my sister? Why truly! he has a red face; bows somewhat in the back, and stirs more feebly than men generally do at his age; but he is scarce exceed of thirty: may not his constitution then be friended, by a forbearing some portion of his daily draughts? and what more likely to prevail for that end, than the intreaties of the woman he loves? — It may have been the so long want of this, that has confirmed him in the practice; then why not this remove it?

That he is one of the best tempered then breathing, added she, is universally allowed by all; but still, with judgment enough, to prevent all attempts for imposing upon him. He is reputed an honest

neft man, a man charitable to the indigent; nor is any one sooner moved to compassionate the misfortunes of others, or to contribute to their redress; as, were it not his confessed character, the present instance of it in our own case, would demonstrate beyond contradiction.

Tell me now, added she, is there not more hope of a comfortable nuptial enjoyment, with the man I have depicted to you from the life only, without the least false touch or colouring, than from the gay, the airy coxcomb, who values himself to such a degree at the head of his family, as to admit of no rivalship from a wife, who must content herself with the sole honour of being the most active of all his domesticks, in her obedience to his pleasure? Whereas, Mr. Wrothless's sweetness of disposition, will scarce suffer him to treat a wife ill; nor should any violent occasion offer for his displeasure, will his good sense permit him to proceed with his resentment, beyond its due bounds: and as to all his personal defects, custom and prudence will render them daily less remarked by me, 'till in time, through familiarity, they become agreeable.

I ne-

I never, in all my life, knew the fellow of you, sister, said I ; nay, I don't believe the whole earth can match you. Why? would ever any girl who may please herself, study every means to reconcile herself to one of the most disagreeable objects in being, merely to demonstrate your guidance to be reason, not passion.

For my part, added I, give me the man who pleases my fancy ; with whom I may riot in inscrupulous delight, so long as it lasts ; — all men, as you say have their failings, and whatever a husband's are, I must bear them ; but the failing of impotence and old age, I'll take care to divert from my lot, I'll warrant me.

We had now been a full week at Mr. Wrothless's, where we had been entertained in the most elegant manner, nor had he ever, in this time, even sought after my sister's company, or singled her out alone, detached from my mamma or me ; though her delight in his most beautiful gardens, had afforded him many opportunities for it ; but now it was remarked by us all, that he had purposely avoided infringing upon her privacy, or making any other use of her society,

society, from the nearness of their situation, than she had admitted him to at our own house ; but as he had before expressed himself as plainly before mamma, as had he been in secret with my sister ; so, one afternoon, as they were sitting together, he openly put the question to my sister, whether she purposed for ever to be so cruel to him, as to still turn a deaf ear to his suit ? when, never was man more surprized, than at her answering, no, she did not ; for that she must confess, he had approved himself the gentleman, that if ever she should yield in wedlock, she had already engag'd her consent to.

My mamma told me, for I was not then present, that he fell into such a fly, upon this unhoped for reply of sister's, as not to be capable of cooling himself for a time, 'till cooling a e, he arose, and embracing my sister, swed, she had applied that balm to his oping spirits, that had for ever effect- his reformation. Madam, added he, I foolishly fell into drinking in my juvenile years, for want of proper avocations, this has, from repetition, confirmed it into an habit, which, by degrees, greatly enervated me ; but with your per-

person and perfections in possession, I shall never more have that time upon my hands, which cannot be employed to far better purposes.

Farewell! my bottle then, added he, and welcome for ever to my soul, be my more estimable bride: for having now an end in view for preserving my existence, to the extension of the human period, never more whilst I have breath to draw, will I, who heretofore, regardless of my being, have swallowed down a gallons, indulge myself with more than a single pint a day;

O! dear miss! added he, since your late declaration has proved so propitious to me, confirm to me my happiness once more, from your own mouth; as if I may presume to request it, pronoun the day whereon all my future hopes may be swallowed up in the celebration of a felicity.

My mamma interposed here, by replying, that undoubtedly my sister would see or hear from her father first; adding, that as it would be necessary for him to know what he was to have with her, so also, for her to know what settlement he would make upon her.

Delay not my happiness for trifles, madam, said he. As for my settlement upon the lady, my estate is nine thousand pounds a year, and upwards ; let miss name, from any part, even to the whole of it, it shall be at her service. As to what her father pleases to give her, be it what it will, I care not, let her take it for pin-money.

You seem, I think, too hasty, said mamma, till my husband has been first apprised of it.

I must, with great deference, differ in my opinion, from you, madam, said my sister ; nor, though I would not have it imputed to me as an over eagerness for marriage, can I wish either to see or hear from my father, before its consummation ; and that, for this reason :

My father has sent us word, that he will give my sister and me vast fortunes. Mr. Wrothleſſ has informed me, it is his opinion he can give us none, and has been so generous, under that belief, as to offer to accept me as his wife, without it. I must own, that testimony of his affection for me, exceeding, in my mind, the most elaborate speeches, not declarative of any real act, has put me upon endeavouring to signify, that my

acceptance of his offer, proceeds not from my own mercenary views ; and therefore, as he proposed to take me to his embraces, in case I shall prove to have no fortune ; so would I, before farther explanation upon particulars, than what I have already heard from my father, express myself, though not equally generous, yet equally complying, whilst I may be a far greater fortune than my father hinted at, for aught that has yet positively appeared to the contrary ; so that, madam, added she, I am neither for seeing nor hearing from him, till it is done ; nor fear I his consent to accompany it.

In short, mamma coming into the same way of thinking, the very thing that had occasioned my sister's study for protraction, now created no less for its prosecution, consistent with common decency ; so that all parties having agreed to its being a private transaction, as wanting the sanction of my father ; they were married within the week, about twelve miles from Mr. Wrothless's habitation ; where mamma and I accompanying them, we dined at an inn, and returned home just about twilight. My head now fell to work for my own interest,

eft again ; for, thinks I, if this stolen wedding should chance to disoblige my father, for want of his previous notice of it, why may not he disinherit my sister ? and if so, I shall come in for his whole wealth.

This delightful fancy preyed more and more upon my senses, till I had resolved it into an absolute certainty that it would be so, with which I had spirited myself up for the remainder of the week, till the post arriving, brought us a letter, from my father. This I being certain of by his superscription ; no sooner was it delivered into my hands, than I ran away with it to mamma's chamber.

She ordered me to call my sister, which, I told her, I thought was immaterial ; but mamma insisting, that not she, but her husband should be present at the reading of it, as having now so large an interest in the family, I brought them both to her ; when shewing the letter, she desired us all to sit down, whilst she read it to us.

WILLIAM SMELL, esq;

To Mrs. MARGARET SMELL.

MY DEAR,

" I Would give the whole universe
 that I had never come to London.
 — I cannot tell you half.— O ! the
 cursed dog ! — I am distracted for
 want of you here. — Your advice might
 help me ; — and possibly comfort my
 broken heart. — I cannot proceed for
 tears. —

Here my mamma was so overcome
 with weeping, that she could neither see
 the writing, or attend to the contents
 any farther ; but dropping the letter,
 and wringing her hands, she roared out
 in an agony, undone ! undone ! my poor
 children ! O ! their poor father ! O !
 ruin and misery for ever ! — What will
 be the end of this ? — I can read no
 more.— O Lettice ! how happy may
 you be, with that good man your hu-
 band !— What will become of me, and
 I'olly ?— O ! it is too much ; I can ne-
 ver bear it.

My

My brother then rising to comfort her, told her, it was no surprize to him, though the misfortunes of the family grieved him to the very soul ; but as they had in some measure been pre-apprised of it by him, he hoped mamma would moderate her passion, and submit to what fate had decreed her : for that, let the worst that could, come, she should ever have a sure friend in him, not only to her comfort but support too.

Mamma seized him by the hand, and kissed it ; but was wholly incapacitated for any verbal acknowledgment of his goodness to her ; and my sister was in such agonies, that I verily believed she would have gone besides herself : but as for my part, I could observe no such abundant cause for their sorrows : for said I to my brother, who was the only conversable person amongst us ; if you took notice of my father's letter, he says not a word of losses, not a word of un-doing, or being ruined ; he only exclaims against somebody, that may have intended, or possibly done him some injury. — Now what of all that ? all may be right in the main yet.

I know too well my father's impatient temper, added I, to fear any thing from the uproar of his fancy ; for that, if eve-

ry thing runs not on smoothly with him, he imagines no man ever suffered like him ; when perhaps the whole cause of his vexation, would prove but a flea-bite to another man. Now, added I, this all proceeds from want of perspicuity of judgment, and frequently from taking things by the wrong handle : for I have known him storm about the house, and put himself into as violent a passion with us all, for our not informing him of an hole in his stocking, which neither of us ever saw, as a more sedate man would, at the sight of his house on fire. Therefore, continued I, no manner of stress is to be placed on his exclamations, unless he had come to particulars.

Though my brother seemed to give me the hearing, I believe, he remarked but little of my speech ; for his wife sobbing so furiously, he turned from me, without a reply, to pacify her.

He made an offer at taking her into his arms ; but she pushed his hands aside, crying out, O ! the rueful day that ever I married in ! This stinging him, he begged her to resist the impulses of her passion. He hoped, he had done nothing to her prejudice ; intreating her not to break his heart by her reflections upon

her

her marriage with him ; when starting from her seat, and clasping her arms round his neck ; O ! no, thou dearest of all men, said she, mistake me not, for a wretch unworthy of a name among women, as I should be, were I to condemn thee, or myself, for our union. No, my dear, added she, my grief is more acute, for that I am never able to recompence thy love and munificence to me, than had I, without thee, been not only made an out-cast from my own family, but from the society of all mankind.

O ! added she, what obligations am I now under to thee, for a release from, not only the most indignant station of life, that I had been most certainly condemned to, but for my elevation to a degree of most superlative felicity, in all that this world can supply me with, of significance, whilst I shall enjoy it in a society and affection of the sole companion in the universe, worthy of my sex's attending for.

My sister, after thus venting her passion, into the bosom of an husband, who prest the tenderest regard for her, than an was capable of ; growing more comfited than before, we now all turned our thoughts to poor mamma, so lost in

her sorrow, as to attend to very little that was urged to her by either of us ; when observing that my eyes were not only dry, but that I seemed to express little more concern in the affair, than for her disorder ;

Polly, said she, is thy heart made from stone, that thou canst support thyself thus, under the calamity that has befallen thy poor father ? Truly, madam, said I, it is more than I can do, to say what calamity it is that you speak of. As for his letter, so far at least as you have by sketches informed us of it, I have heard of no calamity, save an intemperance in his expressions, which may have arisen as well from a trifle, as from a matter of the utmost consequence ; you well knowing, how waspish he has ever been, as well at matters of no moment, as at occurrences of more affecting natures ; so that what has surprized me the most of any thing, all this while, has been, to see you and my sister afflicting yourselves in as solemn a manner, as if all the world had depended upon one stake, and that had this instant been lost by you.

Now give me but leave to hear the letter out, and if therein ought shall appear

of

of discomfort to us, I'll sit me down and cry with the tenderest of you ; though till then, I must beg leave to reserve my tears for a more interesting occasion.

My mamma replying, that she was not able to go through with it, I desired she would give my brother leave to finish it, which she said he should, so soon as ever she should be capable of attending it.



H 5

C H A P.

C H A P. XI.

*Proceed with Mr. Sm---ell's lett
 Mrs. Sm---ell almost mad. Polly
 heart still. Debate about farr
 reading the letter. Polly peruses
 alone. All in the dark as to the lett.
 Polly runs mad. Another letter fr
 Mr. Sm---ell to get him out of pris
 Mrs. Sm---ell, Mr. Wrotbleſſ, a
 his wife go to London.*

After we had sat and discoursed :
 berly for a while ; my mamn
 desiring my brother to finish the lett
 for her, but to read slowly and distinc
 ly, that she might imbibe the who
 fense of it ; he began where my mamn
 had before left off.

“ Out it must come !—but I am u
 equal to the task.—It is not half t
 villain's knavery that I can recollect
 —never entered such a roguery in
 the heart of man!—O ! my head
 all confusion!—O ! pox of the che:
 Ay, any thing, till he got my mone

— I wish it had stopt there. — Alas ! for my estate ! and then, what did they call them, but bubbles ? — Bubbles ! with a pox to them ! — Ay, bubbles indeed, with a murrain ! — What had I to do with a * fare faces ! — What ? nothing at all ? — Not sell them for any price ? — No. — * Sare faces is all the cry. — Each damns * the fare faces. — I damn them all. — You will think me mad. — I am distracted ; indeed I am.

My mother had wept silently hitherto ; but now, she broke forth into the strongest symptoms of despair and anguish. She tore her hair ; called out, O ! my husband ! my dearest husband ! Yes, I can comfort thee. — Ay, and will comfort thee ; nor will I tarry a moment before I set out to thee. — O ! hire me a coach ; get me horses ; — I have none of my own now ; nor shall I, ever more. — O ! that I could fly this night to my dear husband !

Mamma's behaviour grew now so extravagant, that we knew not what to make of her. She vowed she would return to her house ; turn the people out of possession, and dying in the action, be buried

* Scire facias.

by the parlour hearth : but she soon grew past crying, and only could give vent to her passion by an incoherent raving ; insomuch, that we all suspected her brain to be disordered, and feared she would grow stark mad.

I advised my brother to resume the reading the epistle, as it were ; and as, from thence, to form some story of good news for her, to see how that might operate ; but he gave me such a frown, as I think I can never forget. What ? said he, aim at her recovery for a moment, to mortify her tenfold upon a discovery of the fraud ? No, said he, nor shall any one thus impose upon her in my presence.

I took the rebuke, and was silent ; but had soon enough upon my hands, to divert me from such like projects : for mamma growing more and more furious, after exerting the united force of us three for some time, till no more strength remained in us, to restrain her from perpetrating some mischief to herself or us ; we were obliged to call in the men servants to confine her, whilst we sent for her apothecary to attend her.

The servant we had dispatched to him, having informed him of his lady's disorder,

der, he presently took it by the right handle, having before heard of my father's misfortunes ; so that, as rest would be the most desirable step that he could take with her, he took a little vial or two in his pocket, and was with us presently.

We representing to him, upon his enquiry, how she was taken, and also the preceeding occasion of it, he went in to her, asked her some questions, and by a seeming agreement to all she said, and humouring her in all her fancies ; he then took a glass of wine, and drank to her, desiring her to pledge him ; now this she consenting to, and thereby drinking the dose he had prepared for her, scarce a quarter of an hour had passed before she was too fast asleep, he told us, to give the least farther disturbance till morning ; then ordering her to be conveyed up stairs, and gently laid in bed, he would be with us again the next day, he said ; but such a group of confusion as we represented is unconceivable ; though I must say, that I could not yet find out the least foundation for it.

Having laid the old lady into her bed, and appointed a servant to sit up with her, we went down to supper, which was no sooner ended, than a debate arose between

my

my brother and me, concerning my father's letter. I was so curious for proceeding through its whole contents, as to desire him to read them over to myself and my sister; for that, I told him, I had seen him put the letter into his pocket; so soon as by my mother's disorder, she had interrupted his farther application to it.

He confessed that he had it; but as it was delivered to him by his mother, with intent that it might be read in her presence; he apprehended it would be such a breach of the confidence she had reposed in him, he said, should he take upon him to expose it in her absence, as he would by no means consent to. He hoped, his mother would find herself another creature by morning, and possibly submit to her fate with more composure than at the first shock of it.

It is inconceivable to me, said I, what fate, what shock you can mean, save the chimical fancies people can abound with from the issues of their own brains; which once, having set up as their standard, no reason, reflection, or consideration is to be admitted, however just or formidable, that tends in the least to the subversion of their whims, or reducing them.

them to a sensible way of thinking : for, added I, I will venture to affirm, that from all you have already read to us, no single word or sentence of my father's is declaratory of undoing, or any thing like it.

He has met with some foil, that's plain ; but it may be in somewhat insignificant, which has so far perplexed him, that like mamma, without aiming to rectify it, he has given way to his rage, till it has overpowered him to such a degree, as to have perverted his recollection for stating his case reasonably ; this has made him run on inconsistently ; but that man must be said to be undone, because he has given too much way to his passion, a consequence by no means deducible from it ; nor doubt I, but if he cools towards the close of his letter, we shall still hear of his returning with vast riches.

This, added I, is my firm opinion of the matter ; for could I find cause for contrary sentiments, none of you could bewail the misfortune comparably to myself, as no one else would have equal reason for it. My sister is amply provided for let what will happen ; mamma is in years, and a little may serve her turn ; but I am just steering upon life, with the finest of prospects

pects before me, which, should they fail me, after my heart has been so long fixed upon them, I question whether I could survive the disappointment.

Mamma having slept well all night, waked very composedly in the morning, when the apothecary gave her a draught for exhilarating her spirits, which kept her pure calm and easy : so that being all collected for breakfast, the tea things were scarce removed, before mamma of her own accord, asked, what was become of my father's letter ?

My brother replied, it was in his pocket ready to be produced to her order. She asked him, what farther account my father had given of his affairs ? To which my brother replied, that neither himself, nor any one else had seen, or heard a syllable of it, more than herself, nor ever should, without her leave and approbation : nay, he said, that if she would be persuaded by him, no one should farther examine the contents of it ; since be they what they would, it could not be long before my father would be present to confirm them himself ; which would be more satisfactory, than such a medley of confused sentences as the letter was made up with, answering no other end than to excite surmises, which it would

would be impossible to ascertain for facts, without his own aid to unriddle them.

Mamma dreading what was to ensue ; for the sake of her own peace of mind, seemed to give into my brother's way of thinking, and so did my sister : info-much, that without asking me, my brother said, he would secure it in his escru-tore, to be produced when occasion should require it.

This slight, as I took it for, nettling & prodigiously ; methinks ! sir, said I, one of my father's family, I may have ne right, either to a sight of the letter, at least to consent to its secretion ; and ce it seems to be denied to me, as a son in your esteem too insignificant, for ter my dissent or assent ; to convince my thoughts are the contrary, I de-mand a sight of this letter, and let me see who, save mamma herself, dares to refuse it me.

You seem in a passion miss, said my ther. • I mean not to preelude you the sight of the letter ; what I propofed was, void more confusion. You are wel-h come to the letter by mamma's leave to peruse, and would have been so, upon shewing the leat inclination to it, without giving yourself such airs.

Mamma

Mamma consenting, I took it, and going on where my brother had left off, had such a prepossession of mind upon me, that I had satisfied myself, I should meet with some thing that would place my former arguments in a superior light to theirs; when I might even laugh at them for their childish suspicions: so that I set about it with an unusual alacrity, smiling as I proceeded at my father's rant, which was continued in the following words.

"The subscription arose apace. — Well! perish all the rest; — while that stands by me, — I am made for ever. — I'll sell at five hundred. — I shall have an immense fortune to retire with. — Funwell! — O! that fiend of hell! — O! — Furiwell persuaded me to stay a few days. — Down it went. — Not a groat but my principal. — That will never pay half my contracts. — Not a sou more to be gained by any thing. — O wife! thy husband is locked up in the Poultry prison; — ruined, — undone, — No friend to assist, — or five pounds left to help myself."

I just supported my spirits thus far, when casting the paper into the air, after tearing

tearing it into a thousand pieces, I set up a scream, which the agitation of my working passions forced me so long to continue under, that what became of me ; how it ended ; where I was ; or what I was ; I was wholly ignorant.

This threw mamma and sister under such circumstances of horror, as were astonishing, (as I have since heard) and much the more so, for that they could neither force a word from me relative to the cause of it ; or from the collected fragments of the paper, make out the least syllable of what had happened ; for I had parated them almost as fine as atoms.

Few people under the uncertainty of the ~~odus~~ of evils, confine their thoughts of em to the least denomination ; and this is the very case of my mother and sister, so from the vehemence of my passions, did imagine nothing too tremendous to impute them to : so that they would have tried each with a limb to have had the perusal of the catastrophy, which must, as they judged, have been of the most malignant nature, to have subdued a girl of my vivacity, and driven me to such a state of desperation.

In short, after making every experiment, both by themselves, and several of the

the faculty of physic that could be interdicted by them all ; I was under confinement to a dark chamber, with two persons constantly to attend me lest I should die myself ; having once or twice attempted it, by such instruments of death, as had been suffered within my reach. Nay receiving the constant attendance of doctors for a month, or six weeks, by them deemed incurable, and put under a regimen, to keep me as I possibly could ; they giving it as their opinion that that would not by degrees reduce my sensibility, it was past their skill serviceable to me ; and in this condition I remained for near six months.

But to return to my story where we left off. It was several days before mamma and sister could hold up their heads ; it had been my brother's post, for the most part to preach resignation to the decrees of providence to them ; till at length brought them by degrees to a submission to whatever should prove the lot of the family ; but scarce could either he or sister prevail with mamma for postponing her journey to town till she should hear from my father ; she insisting he had not only at the beginning of his letter wished for her, but possibly

have enjoined her the journey, or have given her directions for her behaviour, either before or upon her arrival; all which she must be deprived the knowledge of by my rashness in destroying the letter.

My brother assured her it was his opinion, that if what she suspected was any part of the contents of that letter, my father not seeing her as he must expect, would forthwith write her another, which she might comply with effectually; and that if his wife pleased, in case she must ~~if~~ necessity go, both he and she would see her safe thither in his coach; where at her arrival he might be better able to exert himself to his father's assistance in many respects than she herself could.

This offer of my brother's proved so agreeable to mamma, not only from her own commodity, but as it might prove of such utility to my father too, that she could by no means withstand it: so that under all the patience she would possibly command, she waited till the receipt of the following letter.

WILLIAM

WILLIAM SM—ELL, esq;

To Mrs. MARGARET SM—ELL.

“ OUT of sight out of mind, my
 “ dear; — but it had not been
 “ so with me; had you been con-
 “ fined to a loathsom, dark dungeon:
 “ — No, no, it’s plain the man was
 “ but valued for his money, — now
 “ that’s gone, sink or swim it’s all or
 “ to you.

“ Can’t you see amongst my ow
 “ friends in the country, — whether at
 “ one will lend me a thousand pound
 “ — I have had an offer made me
 “ compounding, but have not wherewi
 “ all. — That pimping scoundrel, th
 “ Funwell; — O! how a man may
 “ overseen! has undone me by bubbl
 “ as they are now called. — I paid th
 “ villain near an hundred thousand pou
 “ for what is not worth a groat. — A
 “ he charges me with near thirty-f
 “ thousand pounds more, because th
 “ are nothing worth, he says, and
 “ can make nothing of them. — That,
 “ calls the difference.—Now where’s
 “ difference between a thing worth no-
 “ thing,

" thing, and nothing worth? — But this
 " I am to pay for.—I am in the Poultry
 " prison, they call it; — though poultry
 " and I were never more strangers to each
 " other.—A fellow locks me up every
 " night,—where, if there should be a fire
 " before morning, I must be burnt alive.
 " —Never man led such an hellish life as
 " we do here! — I have several compa-
 " nions on the same account. — I shall
 " soon rot here if not released: — I want,
 " methinks, to see you, and yet don't
 " come to no purpose.—You may think I
 " can't keep you here who can scarce
 " support myself. — If you can't come,
 " send me some money, some how, or I
 " perish. — I am now little better than
 " when at large as to that. — Here I pay
 " much for a little; there I have paid my
 " all for nothing. — I wish I could but
 " hang Funwell; — I should then die
 " content.

" You'll find it hard raising a thousand
 " pounds if my neighbours know I can't
 " pay them.—That damned subscription
 " they say's a cheat: so that's all gone.—
 " But I am told by a man that knows the
 " law, that he'll recover my estate for
 " five hundred pounds.—He seems cock
 " sure. — But where must I get the mo-
 " ney?

“ ney? — I wish I was once out.—]
 “ a great deal to say about Funwe
 “ am weary of complaining; — so
 “ you will do what you can, or I
 “ soon grow distracted.—Let me he
 “ see you, or somebody, or somethir

“ Your loving husband,

“ W. SM—E

My mamma bore the reading of t
 bove letter to her by my brother, wit
 more temper than he expected; but
 subject being grown familiar to her,
 ture could not recoil so at its repeti
 as at the first shock of the disaster: so
 he having finished it, they fell dir
 upon ways and means for affording
 most speedy relief to my father's fo
 circumstances.

As to my searching for money amo
 our acquaintance, said mamma, wh
 there of our late friends that will crea
 bankrupt? For my own part, added
 I can, and will contract my views wi
 the narrowest sphere to serve my husba
 but what will that do to freeing him f
 his confinement?

I was in hopes, madam, said my brother, that I had before said enough to have qualified every uneasiness of yours upon that head, as well as personally for your own emolument ; please therefore to recollect that, and spare yourself all concern about whom you shall apply to. My purse, added he, is at your command for my wife's sake ; so far as ten thousand pounds will be of use to my father's affairs, to discharge him from durance ; and my house and table you may command for your own family : then suffer not the fortune of adventurers to dwell too heavily upon those brows, that it shall be my future concern to preserve in serenity.

If you approve it, added he, my wife and I will attend you to London, where, from my father's own relation, we will inform ourselves the worst of every thing ; nor doubt I at my return of his occupying a corner of the coach with us ; but let me beg one favour of you, that you would refrain from every the least reproachful hint at his past conduct. He has meant well, but it has failed ; nor can the most cautious of us promise ourselves success in all our undertakings. This is a gift beyond

yond our powers, the means only resting
within our reach.

Both the ladies admired his generous
way of thinking, and engaging to pursue
his directions, they set forwards with all
speed to my poor father.

C H A P. XII.

*Mr. Wrothless visits Mr. Sm—ell.
Ladies take lodgings. Frightened at
not seeing Mr. Wrothless. Surprized
at seeing Mr. Sm—ell. Mr. Wroth-
less's marriage discovered to Mr.
Sm—ell. Funwell's way of bub-
bling Mr. Sm—ell. Return to the
country.*

THEY arrived in London on the
third evening of their travel, and
as they presumed their stay might be some
weeks in town before all my father's af-
fairs could be compleated ; they purposed
only to lie at the inn they put up at for the
first night, and the next morning, after
they had taken a genteel lodging, intend-
ed to visit my father.

The

The nearer my mother approached him, the more she was affected by her errand : so that determining with herself, that some one of them should see him first before she did, that a fair report being made to her of the place she must expect to find him in, and of his own health and condition ; she hoped, she should not be so cast down by the visit, as she should be at finding matters upon sight, possibly, more wretched than the opinion she had harboured of them.

She informed my brother of her inclination, and in the morning, desiring him to address himself to my father alone, said, that she and my sister would in the mean while look out for their lodgings.

He judged it best to go together ; but her reason soon silenced him : so that they but just took their breakfasts before they parted ; he to my father's quarters, and the ladies in search of an apartment.

These had soon finished their business, and were now returned to their inn, in order to dispatch away their baggage by their servants, to the lodging they had taken ; where they purposed to lie that night ; but now, never crept moments more slowly than till my brother's return to them again.

They had waited till dinner time without bespeaking any, being unresolved what account he might bring them, or whether they might not be obliged to dine with my father; but four o'clock in the evening being come, my mamma, who had accustomed herself to the exactest regularity in eating; what with the want of her dinner, and the turbulency of her cogitations relative to my father, grew so sick, as obliged them to look out for that meal; when little being left, so late, in the house, some fish were dressed, and they went to dinner.

It was near six o'clock before they arose from the table; my sister having for some hours been ready to die away with fear, lest any accident should have befallen her husband; but had not once dared to let mamma see the least token of it, lest she should distract herself with fresh meras.

Day light was now shut in, when my sister's vexations grew so masterless, that she feared she could support under them no longer; the sole stay whereon she rested being this, that her husband being far from a stranger in town, might probably have fallen into the company of some of his former associates, with whom he would

be obliged to spend the evening ; but then reflecting, that he would also be obliged to break through the bounds he had stinted himself to of his pint a day, which from the time of his marriage with her, he had never once exceeded ; and that an inlet being once made into a vicious course, it would but prove a precedent for future excesses ; she was almost delirious.

The clock had now struck ten, when able to endure it no longer ; dear madam, said she, what must we do in this dilemma ? I durst not go to our lodging lest Mr. Wrothless should come in our absence, and not know where to find us , nor can we tarry here to the disturbance of our landlady's family, without giving her some assurance, either that we shall, or shall not, come to her to night.

Mamma would have sent a servant to excuse their coming till next day ; but the very thought of that brought such horrors upon my sister's mind, with regard to my brother's safety, whom she now feared to be fallen into some mischief, as possibly, robbed and abused, or so stunned by some blow, as neither to be capable of walking alone, or directing whether he should be brought to ; that had not at that instant, the feet of some persons been heard by

her upon the stairs, and the voice, as she thought of her husband, she had certainly fallen into fits, she was under such a bitter conflict of her spirits.

The ensuing moment, the chamberlain ushering my brother into the room, her spirits recovered their vigour ; but a sight of my father at his heels, had well nigh destroyed both the ladies.

Their joy being past all endurance, threw them both into such a fresh course of weeping, at they were not for a long time to be reclaimed from. My father, falling upon the neck of mamma, whilst my brother consoled his wife under the assurance, that he had been so seriously employed ever since he left her in negotiating my father's discharge, as not to have enjoyed the least spare moment for refreshing himself, by bit or sup, since his breakfast.

The rejoicing of each was so abundant, and so many questions were to be demanded, and responses given to them ; that considering the necessity of a good supper for the gentlemen, and the time, both that, and their dialogues would consume, they concluded upon taking up their rest at the inn for that night, and sent word

o their lodging, they should not be their ill next day.

My brother perceiving mamma's impatience for diving into the mystery of all that had passed ; entreated her to withhold her demands till the morrow, when Mr. Sm—ell (as he still called him, having not yet informed the old gentleman of his marriage with my sister) would be more at leisure for dwelling upon particulars : for after so tedious a separation as had been between them, their hearts must abound with too many tendernesses for interruption by story-telling that night.

This my father confessing to be too much his ease, drew mamma to his lap, and kissed her, expressing at the same time such a fondness, as delighted mamma in no mean degree ; nor observing what sport they were at, could my brother refrain from the like exercise.

My father spying this, and amazed at my sister's admitting him to such freedoms, as she had ever before denied him ; jogged mamma to take notice of it. Well ! my dear, said she, and have you any thing to object against every man kissing his own wife.

Wife ! child, replied my father, no, no, that day's past. She might assuredly

have been so, but — my love, said mamma; she's an old married woman, almost fit to be a mother by this time, Impossible! said he. Its fact, said mamma, and had but poor Polly as good an husband, I should still count myself an happy woman.

My father then quitting mamma, and embracing my sister; Is what my wife tells me true? Child, said he, are you so happy, as to be the wife of my dearest, best of friends, Mr. Wrothless?

My sister acknowledging she was, and at the same time begging pardon for engaging in such an affair without his consent and notice, they both begg'd his blessing, which he gave them; adding, that Mr. Wrothless had already given him his life that day; but then had established him in the enjoyment of it.

Mamma wondered at Mr. Wrothless's silence to her husband, having been so many hours with him that day, she said; but he assured her, he had been sufficiently engaged to prevent it; nor would he have mentioned it till next morning, had not his fondness for his dear wife betrayed him.

They spent the remainder of the evening in mutual delights, so far as the weight upon

upon my father's heart would admit of, till bed time ; and the next day mamma gained the fulfilling of her inclination, from a detail of my father's transactions since he had been in town.

He had already informed her of his acquaintance with Mr. Funwell, as how it commenced and proceeded till the sale of his estate : for, said he, that no time might be lost, he promised to procure me, upon his own credit, a vast parcel of what I have since known by the name of bubbles, to be paid for at such a day, at such a price, which was vastly exceeding what they then sold for, as I have since discovered ; and this was upon pretence of some private intelligence he had, that they would be more valuable than what I was to pay for

him ; and when the estate came to be

settled, he received the purchase-money himself, on pretence of paying for these bubbles. Farther, then pretending there to be deficient in payment, he wanted a bill of sale of all my goods in the country, as an indemnity to him for what he should advance for me ; buthang thought that had but an ill look with it so I told him ; upon which he put it with, he scorned to ask any thing of me, he had such an esteem for as myself,

that should in any shape seem disagreeable to me; wherefore, that it only might appear in case of death; that such a transaction had passed between us, he would insist upon no more than a warrant of attorney for the money.

I looked upon this as such a trifling thing, added he, that I gave it to his lawyer forthwith; but since I have been confined, have found what I esteemed such a trifle, to have been arming him with the most desperate weapon I could put into a rash man's hand; it slaying by surprize, without any notice of the danger.

He advised me to sell my South Sea at seven hundred, when I should have a fund capable of doing what I pleased with, and carrying all the world before me; and that I might have the less trouble of attending, and subjecting myself to be pressed to death by the multitude in the height of the hours of transfer; he persuaded me to transfer all my stock to his name, so soon as the books were open one morning, and then he could negociate it as occasion should offer without me.

This I did, said my father, and had daily accounts, both from his memory, and what he read to me out of his great book, as big as our church book of martyrs,

tyrs, of the prodigious quantities of one thing or other that he had purchased for me ; but I never saw any of the things, save in a drawer or two, which he would now and then draw half out, and point to me how vastly they were encreasing ; but I very well remember, that upon going to overlook them one day, hold ! hold ! said he, they are all numbered and figured ; therefore should you by chance displace any of them, I may have a month's time to spend in rectifying them, and my books, to make them tally : so that the affair consisting of such nicety, I never once attempted it.

Now this also since my confinement I have been made to believe was all a cheat ; it being much questioned by many of my companions there, and those sensible men, some of them too, whether he ever bought me any thing at all with my money. However, he pretended, when I came to desire him to transfer my original stock to me, that he had sold it, and employed the money in the fourth subscription receipts, and several other then purchasable commodities, which being sunk to no value, all that remained of my subscription would fall short by five thousand pounds, to make good to him the engagements he was under, for the difference of shares

purchased on my account, and to which he was liable.

This you'll say, added my father, was very hard lines; but the next day, having heard at a coffee-house I used, that no one would be obliged to pay for the difference of shares, which they could not reap any profit from; I stormed and raged, and again insisted upon the money that my subscription would sell for, offering myself to stand engaged for the difference of the bubbles.

Now, what a trick do you think he had to play me for this? said my father. Why truly, I was to give my notes for differences to two or three of his own gang, as I have since discovered them to be, and my subscriptions were to be made good to me the next day. Well! I performed my part to four thousand six hundred pounds value, hoping from them to have discharged the incumbrance of my notes; but after three days search for Funwell, I was credibly informed, that he was in Holland by that time; and whilst I was still endeavouring after farther satisfaction in that point, I was surprized, secured, imprisoned, and detained in the Poultry upon my notes; where had it not been for my son-in-law, I must have lain till

till I had starved ; but acquainting him, that my creditors had offered to compound their demands for a crown in the pound ; he never left the pursuit till he had cleared me, paid my fees, and delivered me.

As for what relates to myself, added he, I meant it for my family's good, and must acquiesce to such fate as has befallen me ; but as to my children and you, my dear, I shall never believe I have sufficiently lamented my folly to my dying day. You must needs all look upon me as your undoer, but believe me ! I have proved so, involuntarily, and hope time will infuse the same sentiments into you all.

Mamma told him, he seemed in one of his letters to have hopes that his estate was recoverable ; but he replied, that since the imposition he had suffered under, he knew not whom to trust ; and as the person who had been so sanguine in the affair, and had made out his case so plausibly, would insist upon five hundred pounds down, that he might never be obliged to stand still in the suit for want of cash ; he greatly suspected, that should he be able to raise the money, the next news he should hear of him, would be from Holland too : so that neither knowing what to do, or who to trust, he had dropt all thoughts of

his

his estate again; but he grew so melancholy, cried, and made such daily lamentation for what he had done, that mamma, who at first could scarce stifle her resentment, compassionating his sorrows, had soon work enough upon her hands, by soothing his anguish all in her power, to restore him to any degree of tranquility.

We removed the same day to our lodgings, when, as we had taken them by the week, and a week's notice to quit them, we were obliged to hold them for a fortnight; nor had we the least notion at first of my father's affairs being so soon settled; but now they were so, mamma moved for quitting the town as soon as possible, by reason of the expence it put Mr. Wrothless to; but his lady having never seen London before, he resolved at least to tarry their time out, that he might shew her whatever was remarkable; nor had he fairly led her through the whole string of rarities, curiosities, and amusements, till they had fully compleated a month there; when all things being prepared for their return, including an infinite share of finery for my sister, which she as loudly exclaimed against, as my brother insisted upon presenting her with; they once more restored

restored my poor father to his native country again ; but the confusion that ever overshadowed his brow afterwards at his inability to appear as he had done ; and the constant uneasiness that his mind sustained for the difficulties, his incautious behaviour had introduced to his family, preyed so violently upon his spirits, as in less than twelve months to carry him off the stage of life, broken hearted.

C H A P. XIII.

*Humane behaviour of Mr. Wrothlefs.
Death of Mr. and Mrs. Sm—ell.
Polly recovers. Reflections on her
Follies. Takes a new course. Pol-
ly's taste for happiness. Answered
by her sister. That one may love
where one don't like. Arguments
pro and con.*

IT can scarce be conceived, how affectionately my brother behaved towards my father and mother after their return to his house ; even exceeding a child to his own parents. He besought them to want for nothing ; nay, even prevented their very

very wishes, where he could form but least notion of an inclination in either them; and least they should be too n in their way of thinking, and secret fr his knowledge what might be acceptab he gave a peculiar charge to my sist either to furnish them from her own pur which he supplied from time to ti very considerably, or never to fail quainting him, with whatever she mig but surmise would be grateful to them: that now, having no other concern or c upon their hands, beyond that of gra ful returns for such liberal and genera benefactions, they might both have the remainder of their lives, in the p foundest ease and serenity, could but th have reduced their minds to an acqui ence with their circumstances; but as said before, my father laid the alterati of his condition so nearly to his he that he died within the twelve mont leaving my mamma, whose constitutio her troubles had very much impaired, consolable for the loss of him; nor sur ved she him many months.

By frequent applications, and the m ingenious treatment in my sister's fami where, both by her own, and my b ther's consent, I was as much mistress beri

herself, in almost every respect ; I at length had shaken off my delirium, and was tolerably become mistress of my passions ; not that I hereby intend, that I could patiently submit to my destination ; but only that I had subdued the intense working of them, beyond what I could myself account for, and was able to form regular conclusions from the premises I set out with, though these were in themselves mostly vitiated.

I was now admitted about the house without a keeper, and by degrees visited, and received company with my sister ; but yet so far from coalescing to my fate, that scarce a day passed, but I spent no few hours by myself in deplored it ; till having wound my spirits up to little less than a degree of madness ; nature being able no longer to support them at that pitch, they would again subside within the customary limits, and I again became converable.

What lay the nearest of all other things to my heart was, that I should be so besotted, as to reject those lovers, who had made such seemingly candid professions to me ; and especially Mr. Lovewell, than whom I never could have selected a more amiable person, or to all appearance a less designing man, from his whole sex ; one, who

who would have taken me in my father's absence, without the least concern, or examination into what my fortune might prove, or whether I might have been entitled to any or not ; and by whom I should have been placed at the head of five thousand a year, a far more eligible post than ever my sister could expect, with the unwholesome debauchee she was linked to.

O ! would I say, how could I be such an ideot, to return that dear man his present with such a disdainful air, as if the donor had been but a rubber in the stables of the lady of quality he had presented it to ? What mettle could my heart be composed of, that for the hope of a superfluity of grandeur, could so scuriously abandon the man it held adorable ? But I am rightly served, would I say, who not knowing when I might have been happy, nor only with an engaging husband, but even every temporal adjunct to boot, must in the vanity of my ridiculous aspirings, reject an offer, whose like can never more be proposed to me ; whilst I shan't now linger on a detestable outcast, remarkable only for my own undoing, and laughed at by the man who would have gloried in me ; till disintitled to every female blessing, I grow aged,

aged, and contemptible, both in the esteem
of his and my own sex!

The chain of my reflections usually ending here, either for that no more miserable estate could be devised by me, or because I could no longer sustain the anguish such retrospection had cast me into; I would run raving under the pressure of my sufferings; talk wildly, and act extravagantly; till both strength and spirits denying me their aid to proceed upon, I would fall down upon my bed, necessitated to seek a recruit to my exhausted nature, by rest and indolence; which generally terminating in slumber, I there usually lay till my past fatigue being dissipated, I awoke composed and fortified after some little course of time, for renewing my reflections, and reverting to my former frenzy.

This method, daily almost recurring to me, had reduced me to little more than skin and bones in my bodily substance, and to a languor in my countenance, little captivating to the male world, from whose I must have still my whole expectations; for that a fortunate turn of one of their eyes might still rectify all past miscarriages.

Having

Having no other hope left whereupon to place the most slender dependance ; as my sister was one, who had never been over craving, either of company at home or abroad, wherein I might have an opportunity of displaying my charms to the beau monde ; though I wanted for nothing, that either my brother's house or estate could afford me ; I had now come to a resolution of quitting it so soon as I should have recovered myself a little, both in my flesh and floridity ; and with my small modicum of money, that was left of my hundred pounds, and a superb change of garments that I had still by me, to show myself amongst the men, in reliance upon my person only, for the advancement of my future fortune ; but as this was on yet a rude sketch of my thoughts, which time and consideration were to mature into action, I was in no over haste in the affair ; as well knowing I had a severe task to undertake, without which my personal endowments would advantage me but little in the enterprize ; and this was, to reduce the subtil workings of my mind to a reasonable calmness and complacency, before ever either my body would be invigorated, or my complexion reassume its wonted lustre. This therefore I determined.

mined to prosecute let what would be the issue of it.

I had but little associated with my sister of late, merely from the envy I beheld her with ; for deeming myself noways her inferior, I could not bear to behold her wallowing, as she seemed to do, in every delectation that the human species was capable of, whilst my whole being seemed composed but of remorse, anxiety, and a trembling for the future issue of things ; but now I had determined upon trying my fate in the world, I found it would be more than ever necessary for me to assume a new character, and, if possible, to gain ease to my mind by society ; and that when no other was to be had, with my sister ; only to preserve myself from my past dependency.

I wanted a companion of a more sprightly cast than my sister, who might have kept my spirits ever on the wing ; whereas, unless I began upon a subject, we might frequently have sat silent for an whole afternoon, whilst she would sit musing over her needle-work.

One day, as every one's head abounds most with what nearly concerns them, I was saying, how unfortunate I had been in life from the misconduct of my father ; whilst

whilst she a child of his, equally with myself, and originally alike dependant upon him with myself, had stept into all the high life imaginable, and seemed to require no addition to her happiness.

Perhaps! said she, you may be greatly mistaken in both those points : for what? If you should be placed in the high road to happiness, whilst I abound in misery?

I replied, she might make a What-if of her creed, if she pleased ; but it would be nevertheless true for that : for added I, if being wedded to a rich husband, with free licence at pleasure, to employ his cash without controul ; if every thing that a woman can crave, as an elegant service, magnificent equipage, servants in abundance at your command, a sumptuous table, and being your own mistress in every thing that you can wish for or require, with an husband, whom I have often heard you confess a regard for superior to all other men, can constitute happiness in this life, I think, I cannot be said to err, when I venture to pronounce you happy; any more than I can mistake my mark, when wanting of the above enjoyments, I denounce myself miserable.

Am I not obliged for the preservation of my being to be debtor to my brother,

for

for my daily bread ? said I. Am I certain of that for a longer space than he shall please to afford it me ? Have I a fortune sufficient for marrying me to a common victualler, muuh less to the rank I was born to, or any thing of the name of a gentleman ? Are not my few clothes to my back, to which I am more indebted to chance than forecast, with a trifle of jewels scarce worth bringing to the account, all that I can boast of as my own ? And am not I, by my education and parentage, precluded from the meaner arts of subsistence till necessity shall force me upon them ? In short, added I, am not I most probably doomed to a perpetual slavery, and that with this racking reflection, like a scorpion's sting at the tail of it, that I was neither born nor educated for these servile purposes ; but on the contrary, buoyed up with the notion of hundreds of thousands ; set, as I may say, upon the pinnacle of all the glories of my species, only that my fall from that eminence might be the more excruciating, and distracting to me ? Never then, sister, added I, belye your conscience so much as to deny me to be one of the most miserable wretches that ever the earth has produced ;

or that you yourself are one of the most happy.

Child ! said my sister, thy miseries are all comparative. Your soul was so loaded with my father's imaginary riches, as to conceive ten times worse of yourself since their vanishing, then had your present lot befallen you before you had ever any prospect of them.

I must allow, that the loss of substantial benefits in hand is grievous ; but the flights of your hopes were founded upon imaginary visions, which I, who must have been equally concerned in their reality, ever disputed ; nor could I be brought to place the least confidence in what I ever beheld as a shadow ; nay, from the moment that my father parted from his estate, I gave up myself to penury, little hoping I should ever be the better for it ; but still, as the proceeding was my father's, subscribed the deed, having determined with myself, to sustain all the consequences, as to be superinduced upon me, by far more unerring hand than my father who though seemingly the sole agent in the case, I was thoroughly persuaded could be only instrumental to my prejudice, so far as a superior direction should permit him.

Now,

Now, though I was then well satisfied, that what he was upon, would prove destructive to our temporal welfare taken as it stood by itself; yet I scrupled not to obey his order, nor ever remonstrated I to him against it; but, as uncertain of the event of things, my application was to an higher tribunal, from whence, by my most importunate supplications, I besought mercy and compassion; and that whatever the issue of my father's affairs might be, that still its sentence might pass in my favour, either by granting me patience sufficient to the alleviation of all cross accidents to attend me, in consequence of his proceedings, or by affording me assistance from some other hand.

The event, you see, has answered; my hopes from my father, dropt, as I expected, and I have been most miraculously relieved from a foreign hand. This, I can never be too grateful for; but whilst I live, by every means in my power, and upon, every presenting occasion, shall acknowledge and testify.

From hence it is, that you have so determinately pronounced me happy; but she must be little judge of true felicity, who shall avouch, that happiness consists in an abundance of riches only; for could

this decide the question, it must assuredly be given in my favour ; but as the mind is the sole hold for happiness, if it is not to be discovered there, we may for ever seek it in vain.

You are sensible sister, added she, with what little relish of pleasure, I could ever support the thought of consigning myself to the arms of Mr. Wrothless. I had been so tenderly educated, that my soul even trembled at the thought of marriage with him ; nay, my very nature shrunk from a suspected contact with him. What then in life could prevail with me at length you will say to become his wife ?

Truly ! sister, replied I, my belief is, that I can readily resolve that question myself : for would not any woman in the condition we found ourselves in, have snapped at the first offer from any creature whatsoever, whom the parson could but have mistaken for a man during the service, in order to so plentiful a provision as you have ?

What matters the man to me ? said I, so I can but be furnished with all other the enjoyments of life. Let him be a negro, or an Hottentot, that's to himself, not me, who can be as gay and sparkling in all parties abroad ; be as careffed, and have

have as much court paid to me wherever I go, for the figure I make, as if my husband at home was an emperor.

And could you love him too? said my sister. I have not told you so, said I; but what of that? when once I was married to him, he must support me; and verily, added I, he would have so little of my company, as scarce to discover I did not. Though you may be a better judge than I am of that at present from experience. Pray, added I, do you love your husband?

As my life, said my sister, and constantly pray for his health and continuance with me. Never offer at that, said I, to me who am otherwise convinced from your own mouth: for can any woman upon earth pretend to love a man she don't like? That do I, sister, replied she, and would readily place myself in the gap to avert the least injury from him.

Let me tell you, sister added she, that the heart is ungenerous that can be ungrateful. Mr. Wrothless has signified his affection for me, by many more tokens than words; it has argse to deeds, not only to myself, but to my poor parents for my sake. Did not he take me from the dunghill, as I may say, knowing that

to be the lodging allotted me? Has he ever since upbraided me with it? has he not raised me to the summit of temporal grandeur? has he ever signified his belief, that any thing upon earth was too good for me? does he not with pleasure bestow both himself and his to my satisfaction? and can I do less than to adore so much benignity?

You may have the art to make him believe so, and that you'll say is the same thing as if it was so, replied I; but to speak seriously, could you not willingly consent to exchange him for a more amiable companion, retaining still an equal share of grandeur? No truly! replied she, might I have my choice throughout the whole human race.

How then, said I, can you stile yourself unhappy? My dear, said she, Mr. Wrothless has purchased my love by his disinterested benevolence; but yet there are things that married women covet, that I may not possess; as an husband, with whom they might delight themselves mutually, as him. Children are an appendage of the wedded state, and few of my sex can be happy without them, but these I shall never have. Now these, and the like reflections will frequently break upon

one at unguarded moments, till besoing expels them ; but yet the ncy of their return must be irksome

I've made it my business, added she, since I have been his wife, both by and mutual strugglings, to discard h vain fancies from my imagina- but the thoughts of man, frequently, ng besides all intention, they will remind a great blessing it is to me, that I can recollect myself, I can bring ly, and good reasons to account, why ld unconditionally love my husband, the substantial heat of the sun, dis-ose misty vapours arising from the of my cogitations : so that, as whilst airy phantoms continue to haunte ain, I cannot be stiled completely ; so neither, when I reflect upon the causes for my gratitude, and regard , can I do less than reverence and y love him ; and taking it for my to do, I hope it daily encreasest, as : to the utmost of my power, that ld, which alone can be pleasing to ing I have devoted myself to.

C H A P. XIV.

Mrs. Wrothless's care of her husband.

Polly quits her sister's family. Settles at Oxford. Courted there. Won't do. Means for a fight of Mr. Lovewell. Flies to his house as from robbers. The indignities she meets with there.

IT was upwards of two years that I lived with my sister after my father's death; in all which time, I never heard or saw the least symptoms of dislike to her husband proceed from her, by either word or action; nor indeed was my brother's fellow producable for sweetness of disposition or integrity: so that, had but his personal advantages been adequate to his mental embellishments, any woman must have been superlatively happy with him.

He had shook off most of his old bottle-companions, nor had he ever exceeded the pint of wine he had stinted himself to per diem; but yet the decay was too deeply rooted in his constitution, to give-way either to temperance, or a course of prescriptions.

scriptions he had engaged in ; but declining annually more and more, he at length broke out with ulcers, in several parts of his body, which resisting the power of the faculty, grew so noisome by their stink, as to be insufferable to those who approached him.

Notwithstanding this just plea for my sister's absenting herself from him, at such times as she could not be peculiarly useful to him, she still continued so tender of him, as scarce ever to quit his room ; nor would she ever suffer a dressing to pass, but what she herself would assist at : she would so little trust him out of her own sight and knowledge, that as the inconvenience of her lying with him would have been more than he could have tolerated, she introduced into his chamber a little table-bed, which she nightly occupied, and for the most part ministered every thing for his support to him, with her own hands.

She constantly during this confinement, both morning and evening, prayed with him, and for him, in his chamber ; never failing to make his restoration the most importunate of all her petitions.

This continued for a full year and half, wherein, to my apprehension, she

must have suffered so, as few women would have complied with to have gained the most ample of earthly treasures; besides the extream hazard that she ran of her health in the mean time; but yet never was she known to repine at any labour or fatigue that she underwent for him; but, on the contrary, after the application of every possible means for his service, her sole sorrow centered in that it must prove ineffectual. As for the latter part of the time I am now speaking of, I am beholding to those then about her for the truth of the facts; I not continuing so long in the family.

I have before mentioned my desire for trying my fortune at large, and some little time after my brother was grown so bad, being perfectly recovered in my own health, and having bundled up all my little fortune of clothes, jewels, and money, that I had to depend upon; I wrote to a tradeswoman at Oxford, who had formerly been servant in our family, desiring her to take me a genteel lodging there: for that I designed to make my abode there for some time; and also, if she knew of any very young and handy girl at her needle, whom she could recommend to me for a servant, I should be obliged

d to her, should she retain her a-
I came.

answer being returned to my order,
I was ready for me, I hired a coach
Gloucester to my new apartment;
aving taken a solemn leave of my
r and sister, I sat out for Oxford,
ng there the same night.

ad been for some time before con-
g my future behaviour; not from
al circumstances in life, but from
ew I would have the rest of the
behold me in, and upon my arrival
ford, gave myself out for a vast for-
but that I chose to live private, ne-
tending to marry, or incumber my-
ith a family.

e dress that I appeared usually in,
e ample change of it, served the
to confirm my story in the general,
convince the young gentlemen who
notice of me, that I could be none
han fame had already reported of me.
not therefore waited many months
I had received the address of seve-
the collegians; but so many objec-
appeared to me from their want of a
nt fund to support me withal, that
chusing to consign myself over to
ing till the death of an old uncle,

aunt, or father ; I dismissed them gradually and gently ; so as nevertheless not to subject myself to the charge of an inexorable ; in hopes of soon meeting with some one for my purpose.

I had omitted no single opportunity of exhibiting my person, in the most captivating attitudes that I could devise, at every public meeting of the students ; nor had I been shy of my person, upon several of the walks where I might be casually met by them ; nor indeed, had any art, stratagem, or contrivance, that might either embellish my person, publish my worth, or inflame desire in the young gentry, been omitted by me, that my fancy could form, or my judgment consent to the practice of, eventually to farther my purpose ; but all in vain, as to the grand principle that I sat out upon, (to wit) the procuring myself a substantial and instant settlement in life : for as to the husband, which was to be tacked of course to it, I own, I had but little choice, having already weighed the consequences of his disappointment, upon finding me a person of no worth, and brought myself to a steady resolution of subjecting myself to his utmost resentment, under such kind of treatment as he should be pleased to express.

pres it by : nay, I had even proceeded so far in my imagination, as to conclude upon a separation between us, which wrought not the least bitterness of reflection on my part : so that I could but, as I had been assured, obtain a separate maintenance during his life-time, and my thirds in his estate at his decease.

I had tarried under this uncertainty for near twelve months, when my fund being near upon exhausted, and my purse nothing farthered by my projects ; in almost the height of desperation for the un promising condition of my affairs, I determined to make a sole effort more before I must be compelled to throw up my game as lost irretrievably.

Mr. Lovewell, had so great a share in very my cogitations, from reflections upon his unfeigned affection for me, and the happy woman I might have been in the enjoyment of him, had not my own arrogancy of disposition, and aspiring imaginations, prompted me to such ignominious treatment of him ; that I now began to receive hopes, since all my other engines had failed me, that possibly he might still rejoice at my relenting to his desires, and again be induced to view in me the same pleasing object as ever ; especially, if I

could but some where accidentally meet, and strike him by some little artifices tending to his favour.

I could now rest neither day nor night, till I had put myself upon the pursuit of this project ; but when I came to consider with myself upon its execution, might I have gained the whole globe by it, I could not recollect either the name his seat went by, or that of the village it stood in, tho' I well remembered his having mentioned to me, that it was scarce more than eleven miles from my late father's ; but whether its situation was to the east, west, north, or south from thence, I was wholly ignorant, as also where, or of whom to enquire the least glimpse of intelligence.

This disappointment of a scheme so judiciously laid, and upon such various stratagems too, as any single one of them succeeding, might for ever discharge me from all farther perplexities, and open a way to my ensuing happiness, had well nigh concluded my tragedy : for having now proceeded in it to the last act, and all hope then deserting me, I had certainly plunged my scissars into my breast, and thereby cut short the thread of life, had not, upon repeating his name, in the transport of my passion, the word WOULD darted

lartered into my brains ; from whence, (instantly dropping from my hand the fatal instrument of destruction) I recovered what I had with such anxiety laboured for.

My spirits now grown all alert, were so intent upon my purpose, as to afford me no quiet in my mind till I should find myself upon my way to his habitation ; but how to introduce myself to his sight and knowledge, I could by no means conclude upon ; till I should first have informed myself in his neighbourhood, of his way of living, his customary rides, his companions, and the families he might visit there abouts ; from the knowledge of some of which particulars, I hoped to draw such comfort as might set my trembling heart at rest.

I had scarce five guineas left by me in cash, which I feared would prove too scanty for my journey and subsistence, till I might effect some what that might reduce my affairs to some certainty ; and had thoughts of parting from some of my jewels, or my watch, before I should set out, for procuring me a farther supply ; but then, which of them all should be the victim, I could by no means bring myself once to determine ; not one of them,

but

but in its place, being so ornamental, as that I could noways hold up my head without it.

I considered, compared, and examined them, as well laid together, as when severally applied to their respective members and stations ; but had my very heart's blood stood in competition with them, they must have maintained the preference ; yet as this would have availed me nothing to my purpose, and money must be somehow had, I sold my diamond buckles, as least in sight, and best imitated, and bought me a pair of the like fashion, as near as I could, decorated with bristol stones.

I was now lodged in a little hamlet, part of the parish where Mr. Lovewell's seat stood, and as the most likely place to be seen by him in, I frequented the parish church every Sunday, for a month or five weeks ; but my spark, as I afterwards was given to understand, scarce ever made his appearance there, nor would the many sifting questions that I had frequently put concerning the method of life he employed himself in, gain me farther information than that he hunted often ; and passed great part of his time in visiting, from one country gentleman's seat to another's, where

where he spent a week or a fortnight at a time, and often had them over with him for the like space.

This noways according to my views, and having upon enquiry found, where a good genteel pad was to be hired, I took him for an afternoon, intending to direct my ride towards Mr. Lovewell's seat, in expectation of possibly meeting him, either in his private walks, or going to, or returning from some friend of his acquaintance; but nothing of him could I behold after several excursions for that end.

My spirit being almost broken at the ill success of my project, I had well nigh given up all future attempts after him; when still, whilst there was life and capacity for action, there might be hope, that after several experiments unsuccessful, yet a single endeavour might be prosperous; I again, hiring my pad, (for though he dwelt not three quarters of a mile from my lodging, and I might very pleasurable have walked; yet having a most elegant riding habit, I chose to be first observed by him on horseback) forth I sallied most disconsolately.

I rode several times by his door, and on the back of his gardens and grounds; but nothing

nothing could I see of my man there; when evening coming on apace, I turned me about, and resolved to turn home by his yard door, which I had remarked to stand always open, and had observed his way into his house and out-buildings.

As I passed his gate, I saw a poor labouring man coming out of it, as seemingly from his daily task; when having a mind for some intelligence, I asked him whose fine seat that was? He replied, esquire Lovewell's. I then demanded, whether he then lived there? and was at home? To both which he answered, yes. I put several other questions to him, but the above being solely material to my purpose, I shall omit them: so that wishing the fellow good night, I sat looking at the house, till I had seen which way he took, and then the other was mine.

There was a little common about a quarter of a mile from Mr. Lovewell's, and to this I bent my way, that I might form some course, if possible, for obtaining a sight of him. I rode backwards and forwards till it was near quite dark, without once reflecting what time it was; nor indeed had I been met with, and on a sudden asked, what time o'th' day it was, could I without some recollection have answered,

answered, whether it was morning or evening, day or night, I was so wrapt up in my own meditations; till rousing somewhat from my reverie, and observing it to be just dark, an apprehension of robbers then most luckily surprized my imagination; when instantly pursuing the thought, whether, said I, could I so conveniently fly for shelter as to Mr. Lovewell's?

This fancy directing me as it were to my wished for haven, and leading me by the hand to the esquire's presence, I conceived to be the happiest turn my affair was capable of taking, and became scarce doubtful of an happy issue from it. If then, said I, the real pursuit of robbers might so readily carry me whether I would be; why may not the pretence answer the same end? Wherefore, without more ado, I set out upon a full gallop; nor stopt I till within the purleus of Mr. Lovewell's yard, and close by his house door, where I set up such a scream, as might awakened the dead had there been any near me; but however, it answered my purpose much better, in that it brought almost the whole family round me instantly; who seeing me under such confusion, took me from my horse to convey

vey me in doors; where I had but just time to declare myself pursued by highwaymen, before I thought best, by way of confirmation of my story, to faint away.

This, I the rather did, that I might gain time, free from the importunities of such as would want to hear my story, and that I might the better determine upon what I must have to say to them.

Seeing me genteely drest, the whole house were scarce enough to attend me; but I had not yet seen him, whose presence alone, I should have thought preferable to all the rest; till as I was judging it best to recover a little, in came Mr. Lovewell; with a candle in his hand to view me.

I near clos'd my eyes that I might not be suspected to see him; but scarce had he cast his eye on me, before he knew me; when tossing up his head, he said he, Miss Sn----ell, well! see and recover her agair if you can; added he to his servants, and if she should not be fit for removing, you may make up a bed for her.

The slight concern he seemed to put on for my condition, almost distracted me; but however as he had ordered me a bed, I resolved to be unable to ride home that night; for it ran strangely in my head, after

after I had considered upon it a while, that the indifference he beheld me with, was only to screen his real desires from his servants, and that he had ordered me a bed, merely that he might detain me till next day, when he might have an opportunity of delivering himself to me in private.

These thoughts kept my heart boyant all night, and no creature ever longed for morning more than I did, that I might hear my pleasing sentence from his lips : for long before day light, I had persuaded myself, that no less than his past fond expressions of love and affection would be revived to me.

I kept my chamber, in hopes of being sent for to breakfast with him ; but having waited a long time, at length a servant asked me, whether I chose a dish of tea, or some chocolate ? I was ready to return her a sharp answer, little imagining she had come from her master ; but briding my passion, I replied, that as I should desire to return her master, thanks for the civilities I had received in his family ; so, if it might prove agreeable, I would drink a dish of tea at his breakfast time.

The maid of the house said, "The master will see you to breakfast directly."

The wench replied, that her master had breakfasted some time before, and was putting on his boots to ride out.

I was so fearful of discovering my real sentiments before the maid, that merely to get rid of her, I desired her to bring me a dish of chocolate, that I might have a few spare moments for venting my passion by myself. This, I then did, in such a torrent of imprecations upon the head of such a villain, as could pretend to love me as he did, and now no less to disdain me. O! the wretch! said I, what had become of me had I married him? I had by this time been more miserable than I am.

Did I not give him the highest reason to resent my maltreatment of him? Retorted I upon myself.—I did; —I did.—I must plead everlastingly guilty, said I; and then, lavished I forth my curses upon my own folly; till having fated myself with these;

What? said I, am I exclaiming at it said she not, that he was booting himself for a ride? Why not a ride with me?—He knows, I must of course take horse presently, and he purposes either to see me home, or turn my direction to some other point for the benefit of my company, that

that he may renew his pretensions more commodiously to me.

By this time the servant being returned with my chocolate, I took but a single dish, lest I should make Mr. Lovewell wait for me; and then, dressing for my ride, I bid her desire one of the servants to bring my horse out, and to beg her master's leave for my waiting upon him, to pay him my personal compliments for all his favours.

I expected that the maid would not have returned with my answer, till her master had been quite dressed to receive me; and that then I should have had some elegant speech or other from him; but instead thereof, she told me, her master was below in the parlour, at the stairs foot, and if I pleased she would shew me in to him.

This, I still imputed to his desire of concealing all manner of inclination for me from his servants, and down I went with her.

The girl shewed me in, and was shutting the door after me; when Harkee! said he; stay, and see the lady to her h'fse. I was now ready to drop; but though he could not fail discovering it, he put on an haughty look, without taking the

the least notice of the confusion I was in. Recovering then my spirits, I thanked him for the favours of the last night; but added, that that hasty expulsion of me, favoured not of the regard he once paid me.

Madam, replied he, wherever I pay regard, I truly affect the person; but I scorn to make future approaches, where I have once met with an ignominious rebuff.

I was then, though trembling ready to die, about to have submissively replied; but stepping hastily to the door; my horse waits me, said he, so, your servant.

C H A P. XV.

Polly dejected. Hides the cause. How she bore it. Soliloquy at home. Returns to Oxford. Gets a new lover. Their courtship.

I NEED use but few arguments with my reader, to gain his credit of the perturbation my mind struggled with at the infamous treatment I had received from Mr. Lovewell; even to such a degree, as rendered me almost disabled for quitting his family: for if ever I could have cause for such instant horror, as would at once deprive me of my sense and being, I verily believed the time to be come, and that I should have breathed my last in his parlour.

This the maid perceiving, but noways conscious of the occasion, straight offered her assistance to me; and her master having left us, the shilling that I had just before presented her with, purchased me so much of her favour, as to fetch me a glass of water.

I drank it down, its true,! in hopes it might invigorate me sufficiently for quitting

ting the house ; though every gulp I swallowed, my whole soul joined in my most earnest wishes, that it might be my last.

The maid then upon finding me rise for my departure, compassionating me, would fain have had me tarry till I should be more thoroughly recovered ; and, in order to invite me to it, added, that her master being one of the best natured men in the universe, she was surprized at hearing him speak so roughly to me, and asked me, whether I had ever been formerly acquainted with him ? But as my story would be more properly reserved to my own breast than communicating to a serving wench, I only asked, whether my pad was ready, and then walking into the yard, I took horse, with firm resolution, never to see that mansion more whilst I should live.

The soul may be capable of enduring, what neither the tongue can be qualified for declaring, or the mind recal in idea, after the scene is over : for which reason, my reader must excuse my attempting a description of my mental agitations, during my future ride that day ; since the most extravagant heighth that I could elevate them to, would fall as short of their real proportions, as the faint glimmering

ng of a dying taper from the brightness of the sun at noon day.

Rode not directly home to my lodgings, that I might not expose myself in the strength of my conflict ; but dreading to the right I rode on, neither fearing, or much caring, whitherto my thoughts would convey me : for that the least thought I then had was of my own or safety ; but instead of growing weary by time, or permitting reason to take the helm, as I was in hopes I should, I suffered my passions through indulgence, to arrive to such an head, as to bear all before them ; nor had they failed in fully persuading, to have plunged me into my former distraction, in a very short space, had not my horse unawares turned, and by a path I had no acquaintance with, conducted me to my own

The sudden surprize of this, and being to be observed in my then frenzied state, gave such a new fillip to my imagination as in a great measure to expel, or at least moderate the rage I had so long been under : so that cloathing my behaviour under a cautious constraint, I passed unnoticed by any one.

A heart may never be fuller of anxiety than under the most apparent serenity.

nity of the countenance : for that the guard, ever attendant upon the preservation of this, like rarified vapours, inclosed within too narrow limits for their sphere of action, increases the internal agitation ; not only from its first causes, but from the commotion it receives from the compres-
sure.

No one was ever more sensible of this for the short stay that I made after my alighting, in the company of my land-lady and her daughters, than I myself was ; which had so prepared me for a violent explosion of my confined fury, when I should find time for it, that scarce had I reached my chamber, and secured the door, before I was flat upon the ground, wallowing, and raging with every symptom of a violent rabies.

I valued not the disappointment of the man, I said ; for I could not condescend to confess that to be any thing contribu-
tary to my disorder ; but to be treated so despicably by him, and that without a prospect of retaliation upon him, gauled me to the very quick ; and now my lamentation was redoubled, for not having used him even like a dog, or worse than the meanest vermin, at the time of my discharging him.

I then

I then stormed and raged against myself, for first giving the least encouragement to the suggestions of my mind for coming in search of him ; for had I but gone off victor, I might still have triumphed, and pointed at him, to whomsoever he should have addressed himself, as my cast-away ; but now to throw myself in his paths again, into his very house, his presence too, even as a suppliant, by way of imposing his compassion upon me, was so mean an artifice, as I should never forgive myself ; nay, though that I did it voluntarily, and with the view of being again reinstated in his favour, could only be known to my own heart : yet the torment of my spirit, for so abject a debasement of myself, would for ever adhere to me, I said, as a blot in my character, that neither time or tears could wipe away.

What infinite wisdom has the great Creator shewn, in his appointments of all sublunary events, and how loaden with obligations are we mortals to him, in that as no other part of the creation, or its appendages are unchangeable ; so neither is his microcosm man, his passions or dispositions : for as in those, there is nothing long at a stay, but in a constant fluctuation and succession ; as day to night, sum-

mer to winter, heat to cold, dry to wet; so in these, love to hatred, patience to wrath, humility to arrogance, joy to sorrow, and composure to rage, are ever succedaneous.

Were it otherwise, said I, what mortal of us but must be overburdened, even to cloying with an uninterrupted attention to joy, on the one hand; as on the other, he must be overborne by a continued chain of sorrows, without intermission; but every thing being so-modified, as we find it is, a sweet harmony results in general therefrom to all terrestrial beings.

The excess of my mental anguish, though most acute, for the time, lasted not many hours, before gently abating, I arose from the floor; whilst some flashes of hope faintly darted through my intellects, inviting me to the conversable world again; but upon casting my eye at my glass, the distortion of my countenance, as a most intelligible index, would have but unveiled the whole matter of my mind, to every beholder, to have been of the blackest composition: my eyes themselves being red as blood, and their confines puffed up to an immense degree: my lips tumified, and my cheeks glowing with such a crimson die, as could not have been

been exceeded; had I been plunging them into hogsheads of claret.

Unwilling therefore to be seen by any one in this remarkable discomposure, I laid myself along upon my bed, either for rest, which I then stood in most need of, or in failure of that, for reflection, in what manner I could best dispose of myself next, since it was but too apparent to me, that there could be no farther call for me in that country.

I had a long contest with myself, whether it would not be better for me to return to my sister, and content myself with a dependance upon her for my future well being; for that, I was well assured of gentle entertainment from her, and that her benevolent and considerate disposition, would think much of nothing she should do for me within the compass of her ability; but whether my brother was then living or dead, or if the latter, what circumstances he might have left her in, I was ignorant; having never since my quitting her family kept up the least correspondence with her, or so much as once let her know where I had established my residence.

This notion, though the most plausible that I could expect any satisfaction from,

entitling me but still to the post of an underling, as wholly dependant upon my sister, I soon discharged my brain of ; and as any place rather than the present would prove agreeable to me ; I resolved upon returning to Oxford, where at least I was highly respected ; and though I had not been able to make my fortune, with any of my former suitors ; yet, as I had never wanted one or more of them, luck might, as I fancied, turn, and possibly, one of larger abilities might offer, with whom, instead of others by me rejected, I might still have a chance for making my fortune.

I was now returned to Oxford, and as by good fortune, my late lodgings were empty, I retook them, as a place where I might most readily be found by all my former acquaintance, who now flowed in upon me thick and threefold ; some of those I had cast off were nevertheless at my service again, as well as others, whom though I should never accept of, I had nevertheless not wholly rejected.

Amongst the former of these classes, came a gentleman to my lodging one day, to drink tea with me, who was not a student of the university, but only an acquaintance of my visitor, and brought with him

him as I supposed, for a peep at his mistress.

He was a very clever made, and well behaved young fellow, methought, as any I had for a long time accompanied with ; and being exceeding smartly dressed, I could have no notion but he must be of some figure. He behaved so genteely to me, that if it was not from habit, and his usage wherever he came, I could not but esteem myself peculiarly in his good graces ; nor pleased I myself a little at the surmise of it.

Seeing no more of him, when my quondam lover called upon me next, I put the question, who the gentleman was that accompanied him, when he favoured me with his last visit ? He replied, a peculiar intimate of his, whose father had not been long dead, and had left him an handsome fortune.

I approved of him from this report better than before, and asked, whether he had left the country ? He replied, yes, for a little while ; but that after a tour he purposed to make through some of the neighbouring counties, he believed he would spend a few more days at Oxford with him.

He then beginning upon his old topic of love, found me so far from acceding less reservedly to his request, that he was persuaded from the denial that I gave him, and the manner of it, that he was not looked upon by me, as of sufficient possessions for forwarding his purpose. However, I behaved noways rudely to him; but plainly told him, that though I should always value his conversation as my friend, I could not condescend from prudence and policy to make him my husband.

It was little above a fortnight after this before he paid me another visit with Mr. Richwould, (that being the name of his friend) in his hand. I own, I rejoiced at this second interview far more than at the first; as suspecting it to be pregnant of a future more near familiarity between us; nor was he at all backward of testifying the esteem he had for me, by every winning art in my favour; till some little time before their departure; having first publickly declared, that throughout the full extent of his recollection, he could not remember, that he had ever more than once before passed an afternoon in so agreeable company; he hoped, he said, that during his stay at Oxford, I would be so good, as to admit him now and then to

to the like satisfaction ; to which, having replied, that I was always glad to see any friend of Mr. Vainlove, (the gentleman who introduced him being so called) they took leave of me.

Matters now standing in so promising a way with me, and not knowing, but expecting his return to be at no great distance, I dressed in my very best suit, with my jewels every afternoon, that he might find some additional charms in my person ; but he put me to no great trouble about dress ; for, on the third afternoon, he returned again, but without his companion, making an hundred apologies for thus singly intruding upon me ; but assured me, that his friend being engaged, he had the rather seized the opportunity of addressing me alone : for that people on his errand, were enemies to all sorts of interlopers.

Madam, said he, to be plain with you, and to behave with that freedom, which every one who speaks as he thinks, ought to assume ; there is not a lady upon the face of the earth, that has the power to subdue me, and to lead my heart a captive in her fetters, but yourself.

It needed no other argument with me to admire you, added he, than barely to

behold and converse with you; nor tho' I should for ages enjoy that delight, can I possibly be more smitten, by those every graces that adorn your person and intellects, than I was at the first meeting between us; both this, and all future intercourse between us, serving but as farther confirmations of the rectitude of my first passion.

I am sensible, added he, that whilst corresponding with a lady of solid sense, I have no more to do than to proclaim my real sentiments; implore your favour to my suit, and to signify, that let your fortune be little, I crave no more; let it be ever so ample, I will endeavour from my estate to make you not only an adequate settlement, but one to your own satisfaction. And now, dearest lady, added he, start such objections as you may already have collected, both in opposition to my person and proposals; that if they are not too weighty to be evinced, I may subvert them; if they are, I may as patiently can be, consistent with such a gauling appointment, succumb to irresistible destiny; but first, madam, added he; let me treat you, as a means to cut every string of my pretences, (if it prove so, with Heaven avert,) and lock up my ton-

for ever, to be peremptory in your answer to this plain question ; have you a mortal antipathy, or solid aversion to my person ? For if so, I myself shall contribute my whole force for avoiding you; more, than were it in my power, to receive you in my arms.

I confessed, that in my opinion, there was but slight cause for that question, and that himself being judge, I doubted not but he would acquit me of flattery, in declaring it as my opinion, that no woman could have either antipathy or aversion to his person ; but that, was that ever so amiable, I said, there were many other matters to be agreed upon, previous to the view he seemed to have upon me.

He admitted there were ; but said, his first demand was, only to know how far those others might become necessary for a discussion ; then desiring I would consider what demand I would please to make upon his estate, against he should have the honour to see me again ; he added, that he took the present moment to be too precious for examining into those points, which could then noways be concluded upon ; and therefore hoped, I would indulge him in the contemplation of those

graces, which had already made such devastation in his heart.

I told him, that I presumed it would be more agreeable to start a fresh subject, where each might less dubiously credit the other, than in that he brought upon the tapis; and from thence we proceeded to the several colleges, the news of the place, and other such topicks; till the evening coming upon us, he first recommended what he proposed to my serious consideration; then craving leave to salute me, which I granted him, we parted.



C H A P.

C H A P. XVII.

Agree to marriage. She insists upon a settlement. A put off as to her fortune. Bite upon bite. Polly's reflections on consideration. Arrive at London. Mr. Richwould seeks her fortune. Polly's hypocrisy.

MY courtship proceeded with all the vigour imaginable till consent was passed on both sides ; but now I coming to insist upon demanding my settlement, (which I had before proposed to be twelve hundred pounds a year, and he had agreed to) Mr. Richwould replied, that if I pleased, it would be best to nominate what my fortune would amount to ; that it might be made the consideration of the deed.

This struck me all of an heap, nor knew I well what to say ; but having often been used to vary from the truth, and to fall upon some expedient at a dead lift, that might help me out of the mire ; I replied, that I would forthwith write to my agent in town, who transacted all my money affairs for me, and get him to send

me

me a particular ; for that, truly, I never strove to retain those things in my head.

Having now turned the tables upon Mr. Richwould, he told me, that he also lay under an almost insuperable difficulty, how to come at his writings in order to make the settlement : for that his seat being in the north of Yorkshire, he could contrive no other method of obtaining them by, than by taking the journey so many places, as would be requisite for making a collection of them, to any other hand ; though that he protested would be next to the stroke of death to him, when he should come to consider, that he must leave me behind him, for so long a time as might be barely necessary for the purpose.

I demanded what absence the journey would require ? To which he replied, at least a month : for that he must of necessity go in the coach, because he had no servant with him, having left him at London for as he set out on the tour he was up when he first saw me, with some other gentlemen, they agreed to take but a pence upon the road ; and that his c

lucky he said was, that when he parted with his friends at Oxford, intending, as he had told them, to stay a week after them, he forgot to order down his own man.

I must own, I was not over fond of his taking so long a journey ; for as he had been so instantly stricken with mine, some new face by the way might make as easy a conquest of him, and then I should be just as far to seek for my husband, and settlement, as I was before I knew him.

This fancy giving me abundance of disturbance all night, as also the thoughts of how I should come off about my fortune, which I could conceive no way of deceiving him in, but what was liable to objections, in case he should insist upon a sight of my securities : I resolved the next morning to advise with some lawyer, whether there was no way to be invented for obliging a man after marriage, to comply with an agreement made before marriage, for settling upon his intended wife, such an annuity out of his estate, be it where, or what it would ; and if so, and I would comply with that, and wait for my settlement till after the celebration of our nuptials ; why should he not wait till then for my fortune ?

I en-

I enquired out a man for the purpose, laid my case before him, and demanded, whether, according to the state of it, a woman could be secure afterwards, who ventured upon the marriage tie before hand? Now, though I had made a vast difficulty of the case, this man of law, quieted my conscience in a whiff, by proposing either articles, or a bond; but then, he said, that either must be made to a trustee for me.

Here I was at as great a plunge as ever; for that not a single friend upon earth had I, in whom I dared to repose such a confidence. I had thoughts of my brother, but feared he must be in his grave by that time; my sister then presented, but she might be there too, for ought I knew to the contrary; however, I took it for no small point gained, that I was ascertained tho' thing might be done: so that when Mr. Richwould called upon me in the afternoon; in one of the softest moments of his dalliance with me; Mr. Richwould, said I, will it be possible for me to part with you for an whole month into Yorkshire? Ah! fair lady! said he, that very step has created me more perplexity than any one thing that ever I had cause to dread before; but so it must be; for

for I know not any other way to reconcile it, agreeable to your safety; unless your condescension, to accept of my solemnest promise and engagement might prevent it; in which case, I hope, you take me for a man of more honour than to falsify my word to you.

Squeezing then his hand, which held mine in it. O! Mr. Richwoud, said I, what is that thing you could not persuade me to?

My joy! my life! said he, and can you place your confidence in me? I can, I will, said I; but then let it be signified by some article or agreement under your hand; least, as we are mortal, should any accident happen to you, before the perfection of your real settlement upon me, (which fate prevent) I should be involved in suits with your relations.

Few words were wanting, for inducing him to a step, than which no one in all nature could be more acceptable to him; so that I agreed to go with him the next morning to the lawyer, to give instructions for settling all things to his mind.

I was now as good as certain in my own breast, that whatever my fortune might be, would be of no consequence; it not being a real settlement that was to be made;

made; but when we come to state facts to the lawyer, and Mr. Richwould had told him, that his estate lay in such and such parishes in the north-riding of Yorkshire, and he had minuted that down; he immediately asked me the amount of my fortune to make that the consideration.

I replied most unconcernedly, that I was to have wrote for an account of it; had not my head been lately so filled with other things, that I had forgotten it; but said, it should be done one of the first things I undertook at my return; though I could not see, why that need be any obstacle to his proceeding with the deed: for let my fortune turn out what it would, it must be my husband's; why then could not he say, in consideration of my fortune, and leave the quantum to a future determination?

Madam, replied the lawyer, you have helped me out incomparably; so let it be, and then the articles may be prosecuted, as that you shall have them ready in three days.

Being thus dispensed with, from either producing or adjusting the sum of my fortune; though I daily bore it on my back, and could have soon delivered in an oral inventory of it; I became the

less pressing for the settlement ; but depending upon the lawyer's skill, built vast hopes upon the articles he had in hand.

As matters were now so nearly brought to a crisis, Mr. Richwould grew more and more impatient for the solemnization of our nuptials ; pressing me to declare both when and where they should be celebrated ; but though I was no less anxious for their completion than himself, I was obliged to employ many little feminine artifices, expressive of my timidity at its approach, and excusatory of my too hasty compliance, which spurring him but the more vehemently to urge a dispatch ; as most other ladies do in like case, I suffered myself to be at length prevailed upon by importunities, for the celebration on next morning after the articles were signed.

Sing thus far agreed, less formality needful between us than before, and I ventured to offer some conditions ; as first, told him, that a public wedding had been my aversion, wherein, (however it might suit my present purpose) I most horribly, it being what I had been most an admirer of ! then I told that there would be another convenience

ence in it, that the extravagant expence of new clothes might be thereby saved to us. I recommended to him, that the ceremony might be performed at some village near Oxford; but not in the city itself: for that, I being so well known there, we should draw upon ourselves such a round of company, and visiting, as I should be wholly unprepared for, unless I had made up purposely some new suits; nor would the company prove either of pleasure or utility to us, who must so soon take a final farewell of them, upon our retiring to his seat in Yorkshire.

He highly commended my prudence, and accorded to all that I had offered to him; whereupon, after signing the articles, wherein the lawyer was nominated as a trustee for me, we, the next day, were made man and wife at Whitney; where we spent two or three days at the inn we put up at, before we returned to Oxford. In this time, though I employed all the art in my power for decoying him directly to Yorkshire; yet, without inflaming matters to a downright breach between us, I could by no means divert his purpose for London, where he had many friends to take his leave of, and affairs to transact, he said, besides what was relative

ive to my fortune; which, as it was in the stocks, he ought to have transferred into his name; all which, might be more readily done whilst we were so near to that city, than by taking a journey on purpose: so that we tarried but two days at Oxford after our return, just to bespeak my passage to London by the coach, and to pack up the clothes I had there; he himself accompanying me by the coach side on horseback.

A thorough consideration had upon every contingency that may eventually arise, in the prosecution of every enterprise, is certainly the first and leading step, promissory of a successful issue; nor can common prudence be ascribed to that person, who sets not out upon that foundation; but yet, it had ever been my method, after fixing upon the end that I would accomplish, to push it forwards, by every probable means in my power; still referring what was to come, to my invention in future, for rendering it prosperous to me.

I had ever, from natural disposition, been too violent in my pursuits to move slowly in them; and so I could but consult my desires, never troubled my head about the incommodities they might subject

ject me to ; which hasty proceedings of mine, had never been attended with more infelicitous circumstances than were likely to result from this my late marriage : for now I came to cool, and reflect upon that act, and found myself upon my way to London, where every surmise of my husband, relative to the immensity of my fortune, must so soon vanish ; I could look upon myself as in no better state than that of a condemned criminal, who every turn of the wheels counts up his nearer access to the place of his execution.

What will, nay, what can my husband say, thinks I, when upon our arrival, I must be compelled to avouch to him, that the sums he expects me to have reserved in the stocks there, are chimerical only ? What less than a cheat, and an impostor can he pronounce me ? And then, what usage can he judge too bad for me ? He will never perform his contract with me, and then being possibly turned adrift, as an infamous person, and abandoned by him, I shall be even worse off, than in the most servile, if reputable employment.

These thoughts tormented me through the whole course of my journey ; but so insufferably towards the latter end of it, that not knowing how to come off with him,

him, I had once a strong inclination for running away from him, so soon as we should be lodged at our inn ; not disputing, but in such a vast and intricate place as I had heard London to be, I might secret myself from him ; which, though under the necessity of subsisting upon bread and water alone, I should prefer to the vile treatment I could only have in expectation from him.

I had almost adjusted the method of my flight, by the time that we had reached the stones end, and had improved my first scheme prodigiously ; nay, had executed it that very night, had not my husband, upon our arrival, and being shewn into our lodging room, seemed more than ordinarily fond of me ; and then, after drinking a glass or two of wine to me, told me, that as his business would detain him in town but two or three days at most, he should be glad, if I would call upon my agent the next morning, and appoint him to meet us the day following, to transfer the stocks to us, and at the same time to come prepared with his accompts for our inspection, that we might be ascertained what was remaining in his hands, and take order for the disposition of it accordingly.

No

No cordial julip could have more invigorated me than this speech of my husband's; as now, I should not be forced upon my wits for that night, but have another fair day for reflection upon my future conduct; but still could I propound to myself no means for the saving of my credit with him, when the time he had appointed me should be elapsed.

I set out the next day, as upon a walk to my agent's, who I had told him was a merchant in the city, and onwards I moved, with as little heart for diverting myself with the sight of London, as ever a poor soul did, that through want had strolled into it for alms; nor made I the least use of my watch by my side, scarce a street that I came to, not having a clock in it; so that one o'clock being the hour we were to dine at, I took care to be jogging homewards by that time, from enquiries that I made almost every twenty doors as I went.

I had thought, till my brains were ready to fly in pieces with racking them, what answer to return my husband; but could hit of nothing to the purpose; till within sight of my inn, when a sudden fancy taking me, that I would insist upon his settling the annuity upon me before the stocks

stocks should be conveyed to him. This start, ushering much more matter into my brain, that I might take time to digest it a little before I should come to the point, I turned back again, and sauntered on till I had wrought up a good plausible story; which, if it did no more, would gain me a good space of time for nging myself in, and perhaps for improving upon my own hints, to some extent unthought of purpose: so that at length, having my story perfect, and at tongue's end, I boldly entered my inn dianer; but though I verily thought, I scarce spent ten minutes in the entertainment, I had made him wait, he said, all hour for me.

After we had dined, the first question was my husband was, whether I hadурсed my agent? And what hour and where he would meet us at the next day? Then, in order to testify how foreign to inclination my agent had behaved to me, I fell a weeping so, as scarce, by every means he could employ, to be pacified; and at length told him, that my agent having told me about my marriage, and what settlement I had, I had told him, that it was not as yet made; but that my husband was under articles for so doing, so

soon as we should arrive in Yorkshire which, added I, he replied, it will take time enough for me to account and transfer your securities when the settlement is compleated; but till that is produced and approved by my council, no penny will I part with.

I added, that I had used every entray for prevailing with him, but all in vain so desired him to forward the settlement that being the only way to make that easy; and then breaking out into farlamentations, there is one thing, added that gives the greatest trouble of all, that is, so soon as he heard I was married he made me solemnly swear, that I would upon no account discover his name, place of abode to you, till the settlement should be produced to him: for had I been drawn into that oath, you shd have gone to him yourself, and he threatened him till he had complied with us.

I could perceive, that my husband was very near upon introducing a different way of behaviour to me upon this disappointment, from what he had ever pressed before; but though he was extremely chagrined in his mind, he smothered it; saying little more than

would keep him another day in town ; but that I should shew him the articles as the next morning, with the sight of which he must needs be satisfied.

So that after we had passed some time together, in prospect of all going right on the morrow, he discovered no farther disturbance.



C H A P. XVII.

*Reflections upon falsity. Her husband
suspects her. They quarrel about her
fortune. The naked truth on both
sides. Agree upon parting. Writes
to her sister. Polly declares her fa-
mily. Her husband his. Mrs.
Wrotbless's invitation to Gloucester-
shire. Polly and her husband part.*

MY nocturnal reflections upon the second deal of the same game I had the day before played, expelled all slumber from my eye-lids.

I was sensible, that as I had now began upon the first act of my farce; so I must be compelled to go through with it; but what I must say, or how behave, should he threaten me for not discovering my agent to him, I could no way invent, to be of force enough for diverting his purpose. That I could make no discovery of a non-existent person, was most certain; but how to guard off the impending crush, that must await my absolute refusal to obey him, was the difficulty I had to struggle

struggle with till, if possible, the settlement should be perfected.

I had tumbled and tossed myself about all night through the perfect agony I was in, and towards morning I had thought of professing myself exceeding ill, which I presumed would in some measure account for my restlessness to my husband, who having been sufficiently disturbed by it, had as often enquired into what ailed me; but then, thinks I, it will be but a day or two gained should I keep my bed so long, and the mischief must come out at last; so that I exploded all such like conceits, and as usual arose and dressed myself.

The first thing my husband looked out for was his articles, which having laid ready upon the table; no sooner had we taken our breakfasts, than he hurried me ut with them in my pocket, and dispatched me away to my agent.

What a wretched figure does a person represent even to himself, who sets forthpon a deceitful purpose, with intent to rzen another who depends upon his integrity! for notwithstanding the scheme proceeds upon may be ever so acutely id; as he is all the while acting a part reign to his own senses, he appears but

to himself as a traitor in disguise; whilst his conscience torments him, by the charge of not only verbal but mental hypocrisy.

How cautiously must he behave least he appears himself and discovers all; and how confounded in his own breast, least every syllable he speaks should be construed into matter for his detection; nor indeed happens it unfrequently, that being entangled in his own proceedings, for want of proper connection and dependence, one part upon the other, he detects himself to his utter confusion: so that of all sciences under practice in human life, I am scarce acquainted with any of them, that requires more skill and dexterity in the profitable management of it, than the professed cheat and impostor who, as he must never speak as he thinks so must for ever think of what he has spoken, or he convicts himself, and becomes contemptible.

At my return at noon; well! said my husband, I presume those articles prove so satisfactory to your agent, as to prevent all farther difficulty or delay. When, then, are we to meet him and have the stock transferred?

He might have guessed by the sullen countenance I put on at approaching him,

what

the issue of my errand had been & either did not, or would not seem-
ognosticate from it ; so that I was
d to inform him, that my walk had
to no purpose ; for that he had ob-
eely refused to do any thing till the
ent should be first executed, and
I have a sight of it ; for he insisted,
him, as he assured me, that he had
ised my father, upon his recommend-
ie to him before his death, never to
e injured, by parting with my for-
out of his hands, till he had seen some
ome equivalent made to me.

This so ruffled my husband, as to force
play of the worst of tempers he could
on, when he should please to see oc-
for it : for this, he now vented, in
upon me, my marriage, my agent,
fortune, and whatever next came
mind. He would not humour such
al, though he should never see a far-
of my money ; nay, he would com-
e a suit at law against him directly,
rather spend the whole of my fortune
the lawyers, than suffer himself
so palpably bubbled by me ; for he
sure, I must be in the secret, and a
derate with him ; or no man of any
itation durst stand out against a de-

mand so just and reasonable; nay, he was the rather induced to believe me a party in the combination, from my pretence of an oath not to discover the name and abode of such a rascal.

One word drawing on another, and this a third, no less reflecting than the former; I was resolved to stand stiffly to it, that my oath having passed, I was determined, come life, come death, never to falsify it; and that therefore, unless he would make the previous settlement, I would neither ever discover the man, or should he be a penny the better for my fortune; and thus concluded the evening, each as stiff as the other, in his and my own opinion.

We went to bed together however, notwithstanding this tiff; but little expectation had I of the least of those tendernesses expressible there, and more especially between such green lovers, as had not yet got the honey-moon over. However, we had not been long there, tho' each had at first seized upon a situation the most remote from the other that was possible; before my husband casting his arm over me, asked me seriously, whether I believed my agent, knowing it to be my express desire and entreaty, that

he

ie should transfer my securities to him, would then absolutely decline the doing it ?

This being what I had no room to suspect from him, I replied, that possibly he might ; but that truly, since he had made such an opposition to securing me first, as if it was a matter of such vast importance, I had but little heart either to desire or intreat it as from myself, or for my own sake ; for fear he should afterwards fail in his performance to me.

I heard not a syllable more from my husband for a full quarter of an hour ; nor had I suspected less than his being fast asleep all the while, had he not issued forth now and then a sigh as from the profundity of his heart root. At length, Molly, said he, do you love me sincerely ?

I asked him, what room he could have to doubt it ? Nay, answered he, if you do, what will it matter to you, whether I affects any estate or not, so you have but sufficient for us both ? I replied, that had I married a man, knowing him to have no estate, I should think myself obliged to give him ; but why he, who had one, should offer at that question to me, I was puzzled I told him.

M 5

He

He was now silent again for some time; till presently, clasping me in his arms, said he, will it be possible for me to pardon an imposition, that my master compelled me to put upon you?

I starting at these words; what imposition? demanded I. Why, of my having an estate in Yorkshire, added he, whereas, in truth, neither there, or anywhere have I one. My indignation was so over-powered my judgment, that I was trying that I could repay him in his own coin, and exulting at my capacity of confounding him; nor I, the least fortunate upon earth, replied I, save a trifle of guineas in my pocket, and heartily glad am I that I have not.

What could induce you, said I, to assure me of an estate in Yorkshire, from whence my jointure was to issue? Naught, replied he, what could induce you to speak so glibly of money in the funds, when you had none? But as this is more than I can give credit to, I do assure you, added he, you shall ever find me ready to confirm your right to it after my decease, leaving me but the income whilst I live, and the disposal of a single thousand pounds at my decease, or sooner, as I shall have occasion for it.

Are you really in earnest, Mr. Rich-
would? said I. He assured me by all that
was good, he had declared the genuine
truth to me; as I also then solemnly
protested I had to him; when I declared,
I had neither stocks or other securities for
money or monies worth, save my wearing
apparel and ornaments, and a very few
guineas in my pocket.

I expected it to have fallen much heavier
on my side than it did; but after we
had thus openly explained ourselves to
each other, we both fell asleep, and in
the morning, instead of the upbraiding
I expected from him, and was myself
prepared for returning in kind to him,
he vowed, that notwithstanding all that
had passed between us last night was literally
true, he could not but greatly re-
spect me; but as to our living together,
he said, upon nothing, it would be im-
practicable, and therefore we must con-
sider upon parting: for, as a single man,
though with scarce fifty pounds in his
pocket, he doubted not brushing through
the world, and advised me, amongst my
acquaintance, to endeavour at doing
like: for that otherwise, whilst to-
gether, we could have no prospect but of
giving.

We continued however at the inn for some few days ; till each looking upon the other as our undoer, our love cooling more and more daily ; least our inward rancour should burst forth into brawling, we agreed to separate ; that is, he was to remain at London, where he had been born, and had ever resided, and I was to seek my fortune, either there, or wherever I could hope to find it.

For the few days whilst we stayed at the inn, most of my thoughts had been employed upon the expedition I should next set out upon : for, having by my fatal marriage with Mr. Richwoud, prevented all advancement by wedlock ; I knew not what course to betake myself to, and then should I prove with child, which I was yet uncertain of ; unless I could produce a father to it, the imputation of a lewd woman, would so for ever adhere to me, that I should be remarked for it wherever I should go : so that, before we parted, I prevailed upon him to give me a writing under his hand, that he was my husband, and in case I should prove with child, from the date of his marriage with me, which he expressed therein, he thereby acknowledged the child to be his own.

After

After adjusting those preliminaries; as my stock of money would but very little longer hold out; I seemed to have no alternative to be produced against my instantly repairing to my sister, to see what condition and circumstance she then lived in, as whether wife or widow, and in what plenty or scantiness of provision, my brother, if dead, had left her in.

However, before I would venture upon so long and expensive a journey, I resolved to write to my sister, to know how agreeable my presence would be with her; and to desire her answer to my inn by the post, that I might frame my measures accordingly; and this I did, as follows.



Mrs.

Mrs. MARY RICHWOLD,

To Mrs. LETICIA WROTHLESS.

" Dear sister,

" WHEN I tell you I am married,
 " your surprize at the
 " name subscribed, will instantly cease.
 " I am married, I say, but better had it
 " been for me had it not been so: for I
 " am obliged to part from my husband,
 " that if possible, each separately, may
 " enjoy those comforts in life, which to-
 " gether we cannot hope for; but more
 " of this if I am ever so happy as to see
 " you.

" What I would now entreat of you is,
 " your answer to this, directed to the
 " Oxford arms in Warwick-lane, Lon-
 " don; informing me of your health, and
 " whether my brother is still living, as
 " also, whether after so long an absence
 " and silence, I may still hope to be af-
 " fectionately received by you in case of
 " my coming into Gloucestershire.

" I shall

" I shall trouble you no farther, than
 " to assure you how pleasurable your kind
 " answer will be entertained by
 " Your most affectionate sister,

" MARY RICHWOLD.

Whilst I waited for an answer to the above, Mr. Richwould and I, though I dare say, we wished each other out of the world in our hearts, still held a friendly sort of a correspondence ; though I would not permit him any more to bed with me : and one evening having supped together, he beginning to enquire into my family, I acquainted him who my father was, of what country, what estate, and by what means I came to be then destitute of a fortune.

After we had for some time commented on the above account, I asked him, what family and country he was of ? To which he replied, a Cockney, and that his father was a taylor, of tolerable business, which might have been left to him had he but submitted to an early confinement till he had understood the trade; but

that

that having been from his infancy, of too lively a disposition for so sedentary an employment, he had began early to keep company, and that such too, as had drawn him into such juvenile extravagance, as his father through tenderness supplying him with, had so reduced himself, that at his death, which happened not above sixteen months before, the whole that he could leave him amounted not to more than six hundred pounds, which, he said, he had no other method upon earth so speedily to improve, as by marriage with some such good fortune, as his friend who introduced him to me, assured him I should turn out to him.

He added, that since all his projects from the marriage state were determined by his union with me ; he believed, that with about sixty pounds he had left, he should go and settle in some one of our American plantations ; but owned, he should be glad to hear from me, and assured me, that if he could but know how I might be directed to in case of his death abroad, he would leave instructions with some one for signifying it to me ; as also, he should be glad if I would leave the like orders behind me, that we might no longer be a clog upon each other, than to the

the conclusion of our several lives, and promised me to send to me to such place, as I should give him directions, for an account of his residence, so soon as ever he should have gained any establishment likely to be of any continuance.

In these and the like discourses passed our time till the arrival of my sister's answer to the letter I had sent her, which ran in these terms.

Mrs.

Mrs. WROTHLESS,

To Mrs. RICHWOULD,

" Dear sister,

" YOURS, which I received yester
 " day, was so much the more wel
 " come to me, by how much I had the
 " less expectation of such a favour after
 " so tedious an absence from me.

" I am very sorry, that any diffic
 " ties should arise to you, in the feli
 " tous state of matrimony, that shou
 " cloud over those delights, which oug
 " to be most conspicuous in that way
 " life; but as you are silent as to
 " cause of your separation, forgive
 " if I surmise it may possibly spring fr
 " your own headstrong positiveness,
 " impatience of all restraint. If so, I
 " don my advice, which is, to submi
 " the condition providence has pla
 " you in, and as it has been your
 " choice to make Mr. Richwould y
 " husband, like a virtuous, patient,
 " endearing wife, oblige yourself to
 " sufferance of his pleasure and
 " mor

" mours ; as not only what is required of
 " you from above ; but as the sole chance
 " you can have of mitigating both the
 " rigour of his disposition, and the distur-
 " bance that must redound to you from
 " living apart.

" I have only given you my advice
 " upon one point ; but as there may be
 " many other suspected causes for dis-
 " uniting man and wife, suggested to the
 " hearts of those intemperate yoke-
 " mates, who stand too nicely upon every
 " punctilio of their humour ; I may be
 " mistaken in what I have mentioned,
 " and shall trouble you no farther with
 " my counseL

" You left my husband in too deplor-
 able a condition for his life long to be
 expected ; nor indeed was it of more
 than a month's continuance after your
 departure : nor did he, who had for so
 many years before expressed his every
 regard for me, decline it more at the
 end of life than ever in his more vigor-
 ous state of health : for he sought, as
 the latest blessing that could attend him
 in this world, when he found himself
 upon the verge of eternity, to
 laid up his breath in my arms ;
 which was one of the greatest shocks
 " to

to me, that in my opinion human na-
ture can be susceptible of.

" His love to me even survived his own
" being, in that, when he could be no-
" longer personally serviceable to me,
" he by his will, bequeathed to me every
" penny he possessed in the world, both
" money, goods, and estate; which, a-
" lone, had I no prior engagements to
" him, will be sufficient to establish a
" grateful sense of him for ever in my
" mind.

" As to your projected journey to
" Gloucestershire; if it cannot be avoided
" upon the melancholly account you
" mention; my dear sister may assure
" herself of an abode as comfortable,
" as she shall please to make it to her
" under the roof and protection of her

" Affectionate sister,

" L. WROTHLESS."

I had no sooner received the above, than
informing my husband of its contents,
and that I would forthwith bespeak
a place in the coach for my journey.
be

fell upon my neck, kissed me, and
sat so, as he vowed for the loss of me,
as melting my heart equally for him too,
no spectator but would have thought we
had been the tenderest pair of each other
Christendom : for indeed, after accus-
ing themselves to the enjoyments of
the marriage-bed for a while, there are
but few persons, however prevailing the
oxives of their separation may prove in-
eculation, that can pleasurabley consent
the farewell salute at parting.

But our affairs being so circumstanced,
to make this necessary for us ; I left
in the next morning early, and took
my seat in the coach to Gloucester-
re.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.



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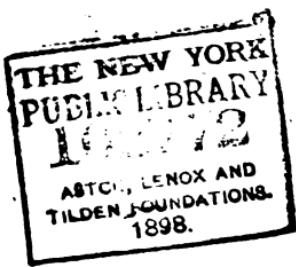
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T H E

T H E

South Sea Fortune,

O R,

Chaplain in the Saddle.

C H A P. I.

Prosperity not owing to policy. Company in the stage-coach. Behaviour of a strange gentleman. Symptoms of love. Pops the question. A courted wife's soliloquy. Shocking perplexity. Stratagem blown up. Part.

TH E R E are a set of people in the world, who are never free from some perplexity or entanglement in their affairs; whilst there are others, with whom all things glide so smoothly, as that they are stiled even strangers to all adversity: now this arises

B not

not from the sharper sense or quicker parts of these than the former, or from any dulness of apprehension that those are remarkable for, as I have many times conjectured; till having compared myself with my sister, I have been obliged to esteem myself of ten times her capacity, for pushing my way through the world, and shining in life in a more transcendent orb than her.

I am now fully convinced, however, that the difference proceeds solely from hence; that those, let what will befall them, ascribe it to providence, and are gratefully thankful for all that happens, as still a donation superior to their own merit, and therefore heartily acquiesce to its dispensations, with full purpose of behaving in pursuance of the rule prescribed them; they make it their sole study to be approved in all their actions, by that Being to whom they acknowledge themselves accountable; whilst these, depending too much upon their own policy, drive every of their views to an extremity, by the force of subtlety, stratagem and covin; which sandy foundations, giving way to the least stream of detection, (a most natural consequent of them) not a stone in the pile can be displaced, without

out making way for others to follow it, till at length the tottering fabrick falls to ruin; and that, not unfrequently, without such a crush to him that raised it, as is irrecoverable.

Nor proves this always the sole cause of the builder's destruction; but as I have observed, he that from the result of his own counsels, projects exalted attainments, without either taking justifiable steps towards the end, or seeking earnestly for a blessing upon it, meets sooner or later with infinite rubs in his way to attainment; till finally, all his hopes are blasted, and all his prospects are swallowed up, insensibly, in frustration; and this, by such unaccountable means, as no meekly human forecast can guard against.

I was now upon my journey to my sister's, without the least prospect, or even inclination remaining in me, for ever beholding my husband more: nay, nothing, as I then imagined, would be more agreeable to me than the news of his death, whenever it should reach my ears.

We were but four of us in the coach; wherein I feared, that the multitude of spectators, all ready to claim preference in

in my mind, would have rendered me a most insipid traveller ; but my companions, consisting of two of my own sex, and one gentleman ; these soon became so chatty together, as to dispel the heaviness my heart was oppressed with, by sometimes forcing from me a smile at the smartness of their discourse, and again compelling from me responses to the numerous questions they put to me ; till at length, each mile of our journey, increasing our familiarity, I became, in my own defence, as gay as the best of them, before we put in for breakfast.

We here entered the inn, as much intimates as had we been acquainted for years before ; for the gentleman, being both young, and of a turn of temper the most facetious and entertaining that could be imagined, became the very life and soul of our society ; but what gave my two young female companions, I could readily perceive, no slight uneasiness was, that he seemed to address me the most solemnly of any of them ; for with these he would laugh, joke, and play twenty little pranks, by the nick names he had imposed upon each of them ; but whenever he applied himself to me, it was in the most reverential manner imag
nahli

nable ; seeming to pay a profound deference to all that issued from me ; tho' from either of their lips it would have been turned into raillery and ridicule by him.

At dinner time, I observed him to drink to my health thrice, to either of theirs once ; and from so many little artifices, as it was possible for him to distinguish me by before company, I had but little room to doubt of his paying no mean regard to my person ; nor could this, though to a married woman, fail of exciting such pleasurable ideas in my mind, as I must needs confess, to have rendered my journey most agreeable to me ; but at supper time, he still testified his opinion of me so significantly, as almost to disoblige both my fellow travellers thereby : for upon our alighting, he fitting next to the door, presented me first with his hand to descend by, though I sat at the further side of the coach, upon the seat himself had just quitted, and one of the other ladies, by whom I must pass, sat closer to him, even at the very door ; but what compleated their disgust was, that having handed me down, he led me into our room, where he stayed with me,

me, without returning to usher either of them in after me.

He had but just time to say to me, “ Ah Madam ! how superlatively happy had I been had fate joined me to no other companion ; ” before the other two ladies were at our heels. Observing them somewhat to resent his treatment of them, in order to keep life in our conversation, which must have sunk so considerably, from their behaving upon the reserve with him ; he heartily begg’d their pardons, for not returning nimbly enough for the pleasure of conducting them in, and further, by way of making all up with them, “ Ladies (said he) I shall but claim what is most justly my due, where there are three ladies to one gentleman ; that is, a salute from you all, which in this case is not to be denied me.” Then beginning with one of them, he proceeded to the other, and last approached to me, who sat at the farther end of the room ; but scarce had he parted from my lips, before “ Madam said he, you now see what I have been obliged to undergo, that I might arrive at this felicity ; ” but so softly, as that the other ladies might not hear him.

He then applying himself to us all,
 " Ladies, said he, since fortune has been
 so benevolent to me, as to have afforded
 me as great an happiness, unsought for,
 as I could possibly have craved, had I
 been able to have commanded my own
 set of company; I must beg leave to
 testify the honour done me, by provid-
 ing wholly for our evening entertain-
 ment." Then ringing for the waiter,
 he ordered in an account of what the
 house would afford, without failure in
 any one article, and upon receipt of the
 report applied himself solely to me for
 my sentence, what would be most agree-
 able to me.

I was horribly afraid least these dis-
 tinguishing marks of his favour to me,
 should have interrupted the good har-
 mony between us; but I making some
 little hesitation in naming my choice,
 " Fellow," said Mr. Readyman (that be-
 ing this name, though I knew it not till
 the following night); the bill of fare you
 have delivered us, is of meats for the
 courtest palates; beef, mutton and pork
 are food for porters, not ladies. Have
 you no chickens, ducklings, fish or
 somewhat light for our suppers? if not,
 you must see what the town will afford

us : for all that you have as yet mentioned, is too gross to set before us.

One of the ladies said, Why not a beef stake, or a mutton chop ? if it was too heavy of digestion, we must eat the less of it : for it would be very extravagant to have ducks or chickens at an inn."

" Ladies, said Mr. Readyman, my pleasure will rather arise, from adapting my entertainment to your palates, than to my own purse : so as that is the first thing to be regarded, I must beg of you to let all your concern center there, without troubling yourselves with further enquiries. I doubt not but our messenger will find something, e're long, that will prove agreeable to us."

The waiter now returning without his errand, assured us there was no such thing to be had as we had desired, all over the town ; but that we might not be disappointed of an elegant supper, his mistress had ordered him to inform us, that if we pleased, she would kill, and clap to the spit in an instant, as fine a pig of a fore-night old, as might not shame a crowned head to sit down to ; nor should it be much longer than a fowl, in preparing for the table ; she would engage for it.

Mr. Readyman, casting an eye at me,
who

who admiring a pig above all meats, could not smother the secret pleasure the thought of it had furnished me with; no more put the question to either of us how we approved it; but "Ladies, said he, as no taste was ever so depraved as to object to what my landlady has offered us, pray let me be the spokesman for the company: then giving the fellow orders for dispatch with it, "now ladies, added he, whosoever is inclined to any other dish, she has but to nominate it, and it shall be introduced to us."

We passed the night, over our pig and bottle, most agreeably, and set out again the next day for Gloucester; to which place I had wrote to desire my sister that her coach might come, on the morning after my arrival, to carry me home to

the day glided on as before, in great anxiety; with still more and more of Mr. Readyman's affection for me, than which some weeks before, nothing could have been more agreeable to me, now caused my dejection proportionately, to the absolute impracticability of their ever proving of the least "y to me; though so delighted was I at his chimerical addresses, that

I had never as yet undeceived him in his expectations of my being single, by the least hint of my marriage.

We arrived at Gloucester on the second evening, when the young ladies, our companions, living in the city, took leave of us for their own homes, and Mr. Readyman expected no less, than that I should have done the same; but hearing me inquire whether any messenger from Mrs. Wrothless's had been there, to wait for any passenger from London; and upon the landlord's answering that a servant had, to assure me that the coach should attend me in the morning; Mr. Readyman, I say, hearing this, though his servant and horses were then waiting for him in the yard, ordered them again, protesting that as we had accompanied each other so far, he would not, with my leave, part from me, till I should be ready for moving next day.

I had not the least inclination for saying him nay: so that having given some necessary directions as to my lodgings room, and bed, we passed the evening together.

Now it was, that I first heard his name and abode, which was but seven miles from Gloucester, but somewhat wide of

my sisters, whose late husband he was perfectly acquainted with.

He opened his mind to me, how deeply he was smitten with me; and hoped, in the conclusion, I would favour him with my licence to pay me a visit at my sister's. These things, though to me they were but amusing I was too sensible; yet were too pleasing to me, to be silenced by a single word of the marriage vow I was already engaged in: so that I made neither a scruple of admitting his addresses at the inn; or of permitting him to visit me at my sister's; under which fair beginning of his suit he seemed to be satisfyed; and in due time we took leave; and parted for our several chambers.

Such a night as I went through, such agonies as I suffered, and such anxieties as I had to struggle with, are so wholly beyond the capacity of the most intelligent naturalist to conceive, as they are inexpressible by the most profound rhetorician; notwithstanding an further explanation of my horrors and perplexities, than that they chiefly arose from the subjection of my deluded hopes, on my first flourishing expectations in life; the many chances I had stood for riches, not only

of my own, but by marriages ; my miserable disappointment in my late nuptials, and the perdurable consequences of it, which might only determine with my latest breath ; all these I now placed before me, in every the most astonishing lights that I could view them in.

Was I but single, said I, a lucky hit might casually happen, for instating me in my long sought opulence ; the very distant confidence of a bare possibility thereof, would frequently allay the most vehement perturbations that my mind was subject to; but now, every comfortable ray darting from thence to my tortured intellects, being absolutely excluded, I grew desperate without intermission. Hope, I would say, whilst but conceivable, might weather out the tempest, and possibly direct the weather beaten hulk to its desired harbour ; but to be debarred of that, was insufferable.

I had, however, sense enough left for reclaiming my passions towards morning, that I might not appear to Mr. Readyman for that abandoned creature, I had for the whole past night esteemed myself : so that by the time I had dressed, and was descended to breakfast, I had superinduced my usual vivacity of air and

and gesture, over the throbbing soul within me, and met him, as the day before ; but neither of us having quitted our chambers early that morning, my sister's coach and six came rattling into the yard, before our tea was half finished.

A waiter, then entering the room to inform me of it, I thought Mr. Readyman would have fainted : for he turned as white as a sheet, at the ill boding sound, that must now so soon deprive him of my company ; though having before made the best of the short moment he had had with me, he submitted the more patiently to my call.

We tarried however, till the conclusion of our meal ; when not a farthing had I to pay for any thing. Nay, so excessively fond was he grown of me, that fain would he have put a stop to all my further travel, than to his own house, where, he protested he would become my husband the same day ; or if I chose not to commit myself to his custody there, unwedded, he would procure a parson, who should marry us at the next church, and then I should be at liberty, if I should require it, for setting off for my sister's, so soon as the ceremony should be over ; nor would he ever insist upon removing

me thence, till my own choice should incline me so far to favour him, as to accompany him to his own habitation; protesting solemnly, at the same time, that all he coveted in life was, only, a prior title to me, before all others, and to be so ascertained of my being his wife, that it might be beyond the power of fate to disunite us.

Observing me, upon this serious declaration that he had made to me, to be silent, and inwardly musing; he started from his seat, before I could be prepared for an answer to him, and taking my hand in his, I expect not your immediate reply, Madam, said he; what I have proposed is of weight, and may require some previous deliberation. Excuse me for a few moments, till your reflections shall have prepared you for my sentence; and, O! may it but prove propitious to my hopes, I shall for ever be the most happy of all mortals!

Stepping then hastily out of the room, in the utmost agitation of mind that man well could support; I began to consider not the crime, nor the judgments consequent; not the perplexities, that an acquiescence to his pleasure might entail upon me; not the wretch that I must for ever

ever appear to be in my oyn conscience ; but my thoughts, all turned directly, to the magnificence of living I should forthwith enter upon.

My husband, I had condemned to drowning in his voyage to the plantations, or to be killed by the heat of the country, change of climate, or any other means that then started ; whereof I failed not of a numerous supply : so that I had well nigh shut him out, from becoming the least impediment to me in my new amour ; but then, what must I say to my sister, having already informed her of my marriage, separation from my husband, and of my flying to her for protection ? What then could she think, or say, should she hear that I was wedded to another man ? This, seemed to me, the most marginal grub in my way ; but how readily can the wit of man invent a salvoe for whatever the heart craves after ?

A thought instantly struck my fancy, that what, if I should marry Mr. Readyman, and pretend to my sister, that having made up the breach between us, thus ; had inspireshois with the sentiments of separation, we had now resolved upon living amicably together, and therefore, I had brought him with me, to pay her a friendly

friendly visit only, and then to return with him ?

I even wished for Mr. Readyman's re-entry, that I might have consented to his proposal, under some constraint, as it were ; if I could but gain his assent, for going directly to my sister's, as man and wife of some standing, and not as a new wedded pair ; concluding with myself, that this was the most finished scheme I could have devised ; and had Mr. Readyman but appeared, whilst my head was so big with its success, I had most certainly given him my hand, upon the above condition ; but whilst I sat longing for a sight of him, my project was blown up into vapour, upon my recollection that I had sent my sister my name o' Richwold ; from which, I could always depart, unsuspectedly ; nor could I offer at so gross a petition, as for Mr. Readyman to take upon him my name, without subjecting myself to his censures, for some fraudulent, and underhand practice or other, that he would instantly impute to me ; nor, indeed, could the truth lye long concealed : for Mr. Readyman's seat, being, but, as I might say, in the neighbourhood of my sister's, it would be a vain conjecture,

that

that his real name could be long a stranger to her.

Finding therefore, that no stratagem devisable by me, would answer my purpose, and at the same time, save my credit, both with my lover, and my sister ; I resolved to take further time for deliberation upon this weighty affair ; but yet, not to let my lover, if possible, slip through my fingers in the mean while : so that at his return to me for my answer, I replied, that upon all considerations, I had resolved his suit to be over young, for the effect he hoped from it ; that common prudence had engaged me, to set somewhat more of the gentleman I should make my husband, before I surrendered myself to him at discretion ; and this, I beg'd him to accept of, as the sole answer that any prudent woman, in like case could afford him.

Having then saluted me, and obtained my permission for paying me a visit at my sister's ; the coach drawing up to the door, he would fain have attended me home ; but this I absolutely forbidding, he only handed me into the coach, and departed.

C H A P. II.

*Praise of contentment. Value of our
federation. Fine characters of long
mistress. Meeting of the two sisters.
Plague of aspiring. Mrs. Wrot-
leff's character, and way of living.
Mr. Readynian's visit to Polly. De-
cant on stage-coaches. Horrid en-
tanglement.*

WHAT numberless mischiefs might
one transient boidie, notwithstanding they be,
in every condition of life, look upon the
present as their own lot; and acquiesce
to it in all occurrences! Striving toward
the best of it, and seeking no further fel-
icity in this life, than under, and
subject to it. It is the aspiring at somewhat beyond
his own reach, and sphere, that originally
creates man's disturbance; whereas (as
though many times peculiar advantages
cast themselves in his way, of which he is at liberty to catch, and retain
too, when fairly offered to him;) he may
as well condemn his fortune, that he is
not placed in the order of angelick beings,

as that he is not amongst terrestrial, any other man than himself, or in other circumstances than personally attend him.

I mean not hereby, that no man should put himself forward for the bettering his fortune, or raising himself, to a more exalted station; for these, are not only strictly legal, but commendable; provided his attempts are regular, and neither over-hasty, nor pursued over anxiously, and that he submits to a gradual ascent, in a just and honourable way; but the evil arises from hence, that the mind of man abhorring his own state, and ungrindedly, enlarging itself to a superior, can never be at rest; for struggling after the attainment of it, he spurs at neither violence to others, or future mischief to himself; so that he may but, by any means, arrive at his darling situation.

Now this method is so foreign from all prospect of a safe passage, and secure landing last, that it proves for the most part, absolutely subversive of the very view a man sets out with, (to wit) his own happiness.

All irregular, base, and deceptive acts, are armed with several stings, which tho' the perpetrator of those acts, both designs, and directs to the abuse of some other; yet

yet it but seldom happens, that they return not upon himself, in the long run, to his own horror and confusion; nor can any law in nature be more equal, than that the deviser of another's injury, should himself suffer, from his intended mischief.

These things I am now but too sensible of, and had I weighed them but well by the way, in my drive to my sister's, I might have diverted from myself the prospect of such shoals of misfortunes, as could I then have discerned, must have wholly overwhelmed a considerate woman; but this race, is not formed for suffering under severities, from like causes with mine; in that, happen what will, one of these cannot stand self condemned; for she acting with integrity and uprightness, patiently sustains all adverse occurrents, as directed to her by the hand of her adorable superior, who cannot err; and therefore, she endeavours to seek comfort from all the evils that befall her; little disputing, but they are sent, either as trials of her fortitude, or for recalling her wandering heart, to a stricter course of duty; in either of which cases, she knows, that they befall her rather in love, and mercy, than in detestation to her.

Could

Could I have supported myself under the like notions, all had been well, and my sorrows might have been embraced by me with greedy arms ; for when I first began to reflect reasonably upon them, they, apparently, sprang from my own vices, as the just, though inadequate reward of them. But to digress no longer from my relation.

It will be impracticable for me, to set forth a tythe of those ideas that swarmed in my mind, during my short ride to my sister's ; but they all, ultimately, tended to my future establishment with Mr. Readyman, and an independent way of life, and gaiety, as his wife : for so prone are people to dwell upon the pleasing, though deceitful side of the page, that they cannot turn over, though the reverse abounds only in truth, and sincerity ; where it makes ever so little against them.

Upon my alighting at my sister's gate, I was shewn into the parlour, by a sober, good looking servant, who welcomed me, as very glad to see me, and assured me his lady would wait upon me presently. I was surprized at seeing this old face too ; for I had already remarked both the coachman, footman, and postilion who brought me, for old standards in the family ; so that

that telling him, I perceived my sister had not made a total remove in her domesticks ; nor any at all, Madam, replied he, that I know of, save of her gardener, who married away last year, and carries on a business for himself.

I replied, that amongst so many of them, it seemed marvellous to me, there should have been no more changes. Were it possible to do better for ourselves than with my lady, Madam, said he, it's most like, that some or other of us had been for making the experiment ; but where a mistres behaves to all under her, but as to her children ; who, but a reprobate, would ever desert so tender a parent ?

I could have blessed myself upon my arrival in so worthy a family, and even wished that I could have partook of their harmony, by joining in their commendations of her, from whose prudence, and conduct, their union was so happily effected ; but the sordid principle of envy, raging so virulently in my composition against every creature that excelled me, had for ever rendered them objects of my scorn, and detestation.

My sister caused me not to wait for a moment, after she had heard I was below; but descended instantly to me, weeping upon

upon my neck for a considerable space, before she could frame her tongue to inquire after my health, which at length she did, in the most easy, and engaging manner.

Having first informed myself of her welfare, I gave her some account how I was; that I had enjoyed my health very well; but that other circumstances had not proved so agreeable to me.. I was about to have given her a detail of my marriage, and should so have done, had she not prevented it, by hoping we should, in future, have time enough upon our hands for melancholy subjects, and desiring, that the first day of our meeting after so tedious an absence, might not be soured by the report of any evil occurrence: for that she should (and she hoped I should do the same) esteem the propitious day that had united us again, as a day of jubilation.

She then ordered in a servant, with some chocolate, to drink after my journey, and expressed so much real satisfaction in her countenance at the sight of me, as would have won the heart of any other sister upon earth to her for ever; nor, indeed, could I forbear, occasionally, to extoll her benevolence to me; insomuch, that

that had we but been upon a par for circumstances in life, I could have adored her ; but what imbibed every rising delight that I might have received from her society was, the sphere I beheld her in, whilst I myself, must, by myself, and by all the world around us, be esteemed, but as the insignificant dependant of the great lady.

Surely it is one of the chiefest felicities in life, to have gained the ascendant over one's own passions ; as therefore, to remain in subjection to them, must be the most abject state of slavery ; but though this, I had submitted to from the first recollection of my memory, I had never as yet, been able to compass that, though under the influences of so excellent an exemplar as my sister.

As to pride, she possessed no more than was absolutely necessary, for the distinction of upper and under in her family : nay, her very servants approached her with a reverence, scarce ever sincerely paid, but where it is least demanded ; and as for her poor neighbours, she was as open, and communicative of her person, advice, and assistance, as if each soul of them that applied to her, was a person of the most exalted quality.

Our

Our dinner, never consisted of less than nine dishes, for her own table, and three or four of a more substantial sort for the servants ; all of which, was daily distributed to the poor, so soon as that meal was ended ; nor was the greatest elegancy reserved, for gracing the table a second time : so that frequently, there have been upwards of fifty, and seldom fewer than between thirty and forty, who have left their blessings behind them, for their daily supply for themselves and families, from her liberality.

Never surely, wrought the same blood more contrary effects, than upon us two sisters : for as to my own part, I would rather have elected a state of seclusion from the eyes of the whole human species, than to have appeared, even to the servants in the family, unless I was dressed either in silks, chints, or some other distinguishable gear from the vulgar ; nor did I ever made it my practice, to take notice of the poorer of our neighbours, till they had first paid the compliment to me, nor ever conversed I with them further, than by a civil answer to what might be demanded of me : whereas, my sister Anne, never appeared, either at home, or in the neighbourhood, in other than a

C. neat

neat stuff gown, and plain night-cap; nay, would even be hail fellow well met, with the lowest class of her neighbours; inquiring after the husband, or wife, and every child by name, with which she was equally acquainted, as with those of her own household; and upon hearing that any of them were ill, away she trudged to visit them, prescribing this, and that for their disorders; all which, upon her return, she was sure to send them; and where the case exceeded her own skill, a servant was dispatched to the apothecary, with orders from her, to attend them: so that she has shewn me her apothecary's bills, which for some unhealthy years, have amounted to upwards of two hundred pounds.

I could expatiate infinitely, upon my sister's pro

quer

any further, than that I had very agreeable company from London with me, and whereof we consisted.

About the sixth day of my residence with my sister, Mr. Readyman came to visit me: but not sending in his name, one of the servants only told me, as my sister and I were discoursing together in the parlour, that a gentleman in a chaise and four, at the gate, had asked for

"For me? Thomas, said I, you must
see my sister; for I was horribly afraid
me to be com-
to try his luck
would not ho-
being then th-
of any man
Prithe-
it
L. who believing
d, was come
ether one next
Ir. Readyman,
n my thoughts

He

He paid his first compliments to me, and then to my sister ; presuming, he said, that lady was the sister, to whose house I had informed him I was going. I replied, that he had judged very justly; when he renewed his compliments to her, and then we began upon our late journey ; the news of the country, and whatever came uppermost ; till tea being over, and our chat, in about two hours space, flowing heavily, he took his leave, without the least opportunity, for mentioning a single syllable of his love affair, before my sister ; but though I had missed it within doors, I resolved to give him occasion without : for which reason, I insisted upon waiting upon him to his chariot, in which short walk, he had but just time to satisfy me of his subsisting regard for me, and his hope of my being more detached from company at his next visit, which with my leave, should be before many days had lapsed.

At my return to the parlour ; pray, said my sister, was you ever acquainted with that gentleman, before your late journey together ? No, replied I ; the man never saw me, or I him, before. Because, said she, he accosted you with

such intimacy, as if you had been
is for a long time. Why? said I,
iarities are sooner gained in a stage-
, I believe, than in any other place
ever: for the parties stowing close,
eing bound; for such a duration of
together; one interest conjoins
, each, for others mutual satisfaction.
ride, they eat, they sleep, at the
hours, and if a thorough harmony
ted not between them, they must be
able; there being no hope of escape
one another, till the end of their

cannot say, replied my sister, but it
een agreeable enough to have been
ur party: for that a pleasanter, or
ugly a better disposed gentleman, I
scarce ever met with; but then, the
ning succeeding the banquet, would
me quite melancholy: for I should
the loss of all my companions at
so suddenly; and that, perhaps,
to meet more; though that, has
indeed, been altogether your care;
an I say, but it was a most polite
in your fellow traveller, to give
lf the trouble of a ride to pay his
liments to you; it being what but
ould have done: for though during

their travel, people seem ever so free together; they frequently, become wholly estranged from each other, upon their discharge from the vehicle they had been confined to.

Though I was obliged to keep up the discourse with my sister, 'till by wear ing out our subject, it should drop of itself; yet I could much rather have been indulging over my own reflections, and forming some determinate resolve, against the next visit Mr. Readyman should pay me: for though I could, by no means, consent to his being apprised of my having an Husband; as my sister, might, both casually, and innocently happen to mention it, at any succeeding meeting of ours in her presence: so, neither could I, without the most consummate assurance, divulge it to a man, whose addresses I had, tacitly, so often submitted to: nay, though both conscience, honour, and honesty, so strongly pleaded against all thought of an union between us; yet it would have been even a death's blow to me, to have put a final period to his court ship.

C H A P. III

*Perplexities of ambitious projects.
Serious reflections. Take a tour.
Criminal terrors. Fineſſe to avoid
her ſitter. Sharp censure for it.
Labour to reconcile villainy to in-
terest. Though vice craves conceal-
ment, virtue fears not the light.
Dangerous keeping council for the
wicked.*

HOW infinitely fatiguing are those reflections, that tend to the reconciling vice to the human mind; when compared to such, as are actuated by the motives of virtue only!

This truth, I believe, -I may more boldly pronounce, than many ladies of my birth, and education. These, from a steady submission to the ordinary course of things; either by means of their parents, or from the bulk of their fortunes in their own possessions, are for the most part, disposed of in marriage in early life; when having little concern upon their hands, save for their children, and families, they are void of those calls to, or

leisure for, attending to stratagems, finesse, or impositions upon mankind (unless in some trifling cases scarce worthy remarking) that my life has been mostly perplexed with: for my untoward disposition, ever prompting me to grandeur and magnificence; there never appeared to me any obstacle in the way to these, that might either by force, or cunning be surmountable, but my genius was prepared, for not only attempting, but executing too, if it might be promisory of success, in aught that would gratify the cravings, of my perverse, and ambitious purposes.

I had now withdrawn myself from my sister, and was retired to my own chamber. Here, I laid down first this standing proposition, that I would marry Mr. Readyman, as the only means in nature, for freeing me from a future series of anxieties, which must otherwise attend me to my dying day; from whence, I deduced this corollary,—that I must be thereby placed in an orbit I had so long coveted, and under the indulgence of so loving a man, enter upon the immediate fruition of all that I had so long sought after, as the sole materials, for compounding my future happiness.

From

From hence, I proceeded to engage my invention to bestir itself, not only for ways and means, of quieting my own imagination upon the subject, and the qualms that might effectually discompose my conscience; (for these, I had resolved to make subservient to my interest) but also, for not only secreting my future marriage from my husband that then was, but my past from him also that was to be so.

In the next place, my sister must of necessity be reduced to silence; and lastly, my own person so obscured from Mr. Richwould, that in case he should look after me, it might be next to impossible for him ever to find me, unless chance, should accidentally cast me in his way.

How should I prevent Mr. Readyman, from some time or other, knowing my maiden name, was the next question; for I would not for any thing have him imagine me to be a widow; and yet, I could never suppose I could long be his wife, before he would enquire who my father was, and where he had lived; when I thought I should be blown as sure as death, and perhaps, for aiming to impose upon him in something absolutely immaterial, though matters of

greater consequence might be concealed from him ; be first neglected, then despised, and in the end, being counted infamous, be rejected by him ; when I need not fear, but some busy tongue or other, would reap up my whole life and character, to the utter blasting of my reputation for ever.

I could start no one thing reasonably, to conclude upon, that was not either subject to a *but*, or a *what if* ; till I was almost disengaged to find myself, either so defective in my contrivances, or that my affairs would by no means bear water ; but still, as my sheet anchor, I stuck close to Mr. Readyman, with whom, and life, I was determined to part at the same time ; for that no possible opportunity could ever present, for making me so happy, as this of becoming his bride.

My sister had a charity-school in Warwickshire, which was founded by her late husband's father, which since my brother's death, she had augmented, by an additional number of children, both girls and boys ; as also with a separate maintenance, and lodging, for ancient men and women, and once a year, she always went over to it, to pay the masters, and provide for her old people, when not only

only the masters, but both the old and young of the charity, dined with her; and what was very peculiar to her was, that she always placed the ancientest person, whether man or woman, at the head of her table; both herself, and all the rest, seating themselves promiscuously, as it happened.

The anniversary of this festival being near at hand, my sister purposed taking me to it; but I had a hundred put off to make, excusatory of my going with her, for fear Mr. Readyman should happen to call in my absence; though all would not answer my purpose: for go I must, she said, it would be the finest airing in nature for me, nor should we be out more than five days.

Being no ways able to avoid it, I took the tour with her; but my mind being always at home, either in company with, or in expectation of, Mr. Readyman, I was wholly insensible of the delights she pointed out to me, as enjoyed by her, at the pleasure each object testified, for the kind reception they met with, and for the liberality that she then distributed to them: so that scarce ever was I more rejoiced, than upon our arrival again to my sister's.

The next day brought my spark again; when I being alone in the parlour, he was shewn in to me, and now, in the absence of my sister, we took our full swing of love, and I had almost consented to the matrimonial noose with him; but still, I kept the matter at a bay, till we should see each other again, my very heart shuddering so, whenever my consent was ready to have passed my lips, that might I have gain'd the world by it, I could not have brought it out.

At the third interview, Mr. Readyman and I had had at my sister's, which was not many days after the second; my sister being with me when he came in, I perceived him to be vastly restless, and uneasy; when rightly judging at the cause, and he, at the same time, taking some notice of the garden, which the window we were sitting at looked into; I asked him whether he should choose to take a turn in it, and if so, I would wait upon, and shew it him; but then for fear my sister should choose to accompany us, I added, that I believed, my sister would be so good as to excuse us 'till tea time, and beg'd her to send for us in when it should be ready.

This speech of mine, seeming to lay
an

an injunction upon my sister, neither to accompany nor follow us ; she took it as such I afterwards found, and was too good to intrude upon our privacies whilst in the garden ; but no sooner was Mr. Readyman gone, than " sister, said she, I am surprized at these visits of this new acquaintance of yours, so thick one upon another ; and were you not a married woman already, I should be induced to believe his errand to you to be courtship ; but if not, what am I not at liberty to guess, from your forbidding me a turn in the garden with you ?

" I hope, added she, that you take not my freedom with you in evil part ; for that, I can promise you, I mean you none : but yet can't refrain from surprize when I consider, how there should fairly have been formed privacies between meer strangers, of different sexes, as you need to have been at such pains for excluding a sister from.

" I scorn to pry into any one's secrets, added she, and had you but by a wink or a nod, signified how acceptable my absence would have been to you, I should not have occasioned your repeating it.

" I mention not this, my dear, added she, from ill will to you ; but from a desire

fire of your treating me hereafter with more openness; and indeed to prevent your behaving to any other person in the same manner, who may chance to resent it: for he that would compass his ends upon another by policy, in the view of a third person, renders the person played upon contemptible, as an easy, unjudging fool, for his purpose; which, to do, is the height of ill manners.

" But to let that pass; pray, sister, added she, if I may crave the question without the imputation of an impertinent; 'Couches not somewhat under this gentleman's repeated visits to you, further than mere compliment?'

There is somewhat so awful in the deportment of a person of prudence and judgment (as undoubtedly my sister was) as commands that respect from those of an inferior class, which they would fain deny but cannot; therefore, though I had ever judged it beneath me, to be accountable to her for my proceedings; her sincerity demanding my assent, I confessed that there was, and that the gentleman taking me, as I presumed, for a single woman, had first addressed me for marriage at our inn where we lodged, and had

had then obtained my permission, for waiting upon me at her house.

"How could you suffer the man that had expressed his regard for you, to deceive himself under hopes that can never be accomplished," said she? "Indeed, my dear, added she, I think you have acted very indecently in so doing, to give it no better a name. It would have been sufficient that he loved me, to have withheld me from any such practice; not to mention the stain that may adhere to your own character from it, whenever he comes to be undeceived; as that, he soon must, should he persevere in his suit."

"Truly, Sister, said I, the necessity of his being undeceived at all, is far from being apparent, in my mind." "Why? you would not proceed to marriage with him, I hope, said she, would you, having an husband already, and him living too?"

"I must own, replied I, that I can find not one objection to it; Will he not fit me at the head of a family I need never be ashamed to appear in? Will he not establish my future welfare in life? whereas I am now merely dependant upon your pleasure, which, should it prove disfavourable to me, what alter-

native have I, but to submit to a service? whereas, deserting you, I may, with him, be provided for like a countess; for that he must be a man of figure and fortune is apparent from his dress, his mien, his servants, and equipage."

"Have you not an husband already child, said she? Have you not passed your solemn vow; plighted your faith to him, and sacredly promised, that forsaking all other men, you will adhere to him alone, in wealth, or poverty, sickness or health? and shall you, in whose ears these engagements are yet sounding, blindly involve yourself in the inexpiable crime of adultery, with this novel acquaintance of yours?

"For shame, added she, reflect upon times past, when our dear deceased mamma used to preach up constancy and fidelity, duty and affection to us, towards whomsoever we should afterwards make our husbands; consider the heinousness of the offence to the Almighty, in express opposition to one of his holy commands. Consider, if this prevails not, the scandal you will bring upon your family, yourself, every relative, and indeed upon our whole sex and race, by so rash, so wicked, so inconsiderate an action."

"Nay

" Nay sister, said I, you cannot have considered this affair, in this short moment whilst we have been speaking of it, so accurately as I have, who have consumed both whole nights and days in debating it, even till I am as clear in the rectitude of my intentions, as it is possible for the subtlest mathematician to be in the solution of one of his problems; nor doubt I of proving to a demonstration, that none of these frightful phantoms you have raised, will, or can affect my particular case, in the least.

" As first, you call me a wife; now, that I deny: for if I am any thing above the degree of a maiden, I am a widow; and thus I shall prove it to the satisfaction of my own mind, and, I make but little dispute of yours too.

" What was it my poor mamma lamented so, for the few months time that she survived my father? Was it not the loss of him? Was not her answer to every one who strove to comfort her, " Forbear to recommend to my dejection any palliatives for the assuaging of my sorrows; my loss of so good an husband is irreparable."

" Now let me ask you one question, sister, added I; Can any one pretend to say,

say, that had not my mother laid the loss of him so much to heart, but had overlooked it, grown cheerful, and taken another husband to her bed, she had been an adulteress, and a scandal to her sex?"

My sister replied, that my argument was wholly beside the purpose, allowing that mamma had been guiltless, though she had married again, because she would have had no prior husband living; but that should I marry Mr. Readyman, the case would be widely different, I having an husband living.

"Truly, my dear, said I, you seem to me to hang upon a distinction, wherein there is no manner of difference; for my father's being dead, as to my mother, gave her all the disturbance she suffered; nor had it been of any whit less fatal consequence to her, had he been living to all the world beside; so that he was but absolutely lost to her."

Now this I insist to be my case to a scruple: my husband is lost to me; nay, which still strengthens my case, has voluntarily separated from, and left me; is gone to settle in an unknown world, where having no farther care for me, he will undoubtedly procure him another wife,

Wife, as may best suit his interest. Why not I, then, another husband?

Now all the difficulty that can occur to me is, how to confine the knowledge of my former husband from my latter: for that, being once concluded upon, no one thing upon earth can proceed from my first nuptials, to the interruption or prejudice of my second, I am firmly persuaded.

" My sister replied, that means were never wanting for the detection of iniquity; and for her part, she wished she had never been acquainted with my concerns; for then she should neither offend me or her own conscience: whereas, if it proved so perverse as to let Mr. Readyman proceed with his wooing, in hopes of making him my husband, she must sacrifice one of us, of necessity: and which must prove the victim, she presumed I should waste but little time to determine.

" Those consciences, sister, said I, in some warmth, are of a very squeamish constitution, that must be ever meddling to the detriment of others, where the case no ways concerns themselves. I see not what business you can have to interfere in affairs of mine; who, alone, must stand

stand or fall by them. Your advice I shall be ever thankful for, when I ask it; though obtruding it upon me, Nolens Volens, and threatening me, as it were, for non-acceptance, favours too grossly of a command, to find any the least weight with me; but believe me, it shall be long enough before I repose farther confidence in you; nor indeed can one well know whom to trust, if an own sister cannot retain one's privacies."

" I wish from my heart, said my sister, that you could but bring yourself, first, to think before you speak, and then only to utter what you must think: for whilst without thought you frame propositions, and are so impatient of all opposition to them, right or wrong, that you will run all lengths in the defence of them; I look not upon your arguments as directed to my conviction, or to the support of your thesis in a reasonable way; but as arising from a peevishness in your temper, for that others can see farther than yourself.

" I have ever judged her the happiest woman, added she, who has no secrets to be kept; her, who cares not if all her actions were exposed at the market cross; nay, she who proceeds upon virtuous and honest

honest principles, need have no concern at their publication any where : for that the more of her deeds are denudated, she gains but the larger share of reputation from them ; not only from people of like persuasion with herself, but even from those who demean themselves from directly opposite principles : for virtue, truth, and equity, cannot but be admired in themselves, and held commendable even by the most flagitious of criminals, from their own intrinsick worth, which no art of man can debase.

" Now, my dear, continued she, if I would avoid all secrets of my own, can it be credited that I would be burdened with those of other people ; especially where they may prove hurtful to third persons ? Wherein, I beseech you, shall I differ in such case, from the receiver of goods that are stolen, knowing them so to be ; should I reserve in my own breast a privacy, knowing it will be prejudicial to a third person ? Shall not I, by my taciturnity, be accessory to the prejudicial act, and permit it to be done, though I am no material agent therein, equally with the receiver I have above men-

mentioned, whom our law holds alike culpable with the robber himself, as an abettor and confederate of the delinquent?

"Would any person in his senses, added she, who pays the least regard to his good name, religion, or morality, permit a blind man to run into the fire, and glory over his misfortune, when by a timely word of recall, or an arm extended to his better guidance, he could divert him from the presenting evil? no, it would be a most inhuman act, to suffer the blind man so proceed in his direction; though probably the unusual heat might stop his course in due time, or at worst, he might suffer but a temporary misfortune by it; but in the case before us, my silence, till the act is once performed, must contribute to the irretrievable distress of a worthy gentleman, for the remainder of his whole life-time; rather than to which I would consent to the loss of my right hand. Nay, were it never to be impossible to me as a wicked act, added yet the reflection of my having only arrived at the fraud you had put upon me in proportion to his disappointment, will entail upon me an endless series of

erry : so that, upon the whole, I think, I
overshot not my mark, when I wished
you had intrusted me with none of your
privacies.

C H A P. IV.

Mrs. Richwould consents to marry Mr. Readyman. Surprized in the critical minute. A word in season, how salutary. Letter to put off Readyman. Becomes a convert. Benefits of reformation.

FROM the time that my sister and I had the above discourse, I avoided her company as much as might be, consistent with the situation I was in in her family ; nor ever suffered I the least debate between us, upon the topick of my courtship ; but upon the minutest hint that way tending, I made some pretence or other, either for diverting it to some other subject, or for leaving the room : for, but lightly approving her doctrine, I chose not to imbibe any more of it, lest the frequent repetition might proselyte me, to my own undoing : so that matters between

between us were quite at a stand, till after Mr. Readyman's next visit to me.

This was not deferred for many days; but happening at an instant, when, upon some occasion, my sister chanced to be in my chamber, we both saw him drive up^{to} the gate in his phaeton, with two servants on horseback attending him.

I began, instantly, to pluck my apron and handkerchief into form; ran to the glass to see how my things sat, and was preparing myself for his summons into the parlour; when my sister observing me, "my dear, said she, remember what I told you the other day; I have again considered it; you are upon a most notoriously wicked pursuit, in many shapes, which I cannot suffer to prosper under my connivance. Do you hear me? for I am determined unless you give this gentleman his dismission as a lover, by either declaring your marriage, or dislike to his proposal; that the very next time he enters my doors, I will be so far your friend as to blast all his future hopes in you, by assigning a true cause for his deserting you; nor doubt I, however amiss you may think of me, of obtaining his most grateful acknowledgments for it.

" Consider then, child, added she, whether

whether the breaking off all further intercourse between you, had better proceed from yourself from some justifiable cause, or from me, for such reasons, as should he blaze them abroad, must for ever, destroy your reputation."

I stayed not to hear more; but being sent for down, I sprung forwards after the messenger, in little fear of my sister's following me, after what had passed upon our last meeting.

In short, after what had been said by my sister, I was resolved to put a stop to her babbling, by preventing Mr. Readyman from ever approaching my sister's more, if possible: so that having now the field to ourselves, unterrified by the fear of a surprisal; Mr. Readyman pushed his suit with such address and vigour, that after beating the shammade for awhile, upon the fewest articles that ever were formed at a capitulation, I agreed to a surrender of the fortress on the third morning following.

I had, in our discourse, informed him how averse my sister was from the match, and therefore my own resolution, that if ever I consented to it, it should be transacted without her knowledge; wherefore if he could contrive any way for meeting,

and taking me away to the church with him, I would be punctual to it; but that, conceiving my sister to affect too great a superiority over me, I, for that reason, chose to conceal all knowledge of my affairs from her.

Mr. Readyman was in such an extasy at gaining my promise, that he readily accorded to all the rest, and we appointed both time and place for the ceremony; nor after he had left me, mentioned I a single word of our discourse to my sister. She the next day told me, she hoped I had acted the prudent part, and given Mr. Readyman his quietus; to which I somewhat tartly replied, that my concerns were wholly to myself; nor deemed I myself to be accountable to any one: only, as she never more had desired to see him at her house, I believed he would no more trouble it.

Thus matters passed, my sister and I being shy of each other, till the nuptial day drew on. I had dressed myself much sooner than ordinary, that morning, and going through a back gate in the garden, had crossed the fields to a great road, where Mr. Readyman had agreed to meet me, about two miles from my sister's.

Though I had been so private in all
my

my transactions, that I could have sworit nothing more remote than my own heart could have been apprised of the least of them; yet, my sister, suspecting what was in agitation between us, from the manner of my late speech to her, had planted her spies so accurately, that I had scarce quitted the garden, and by the course I took, signified my destination, before the coach was ordered, and herself mounted therein, in pursuit of me; whom, no sooner had they reached the great road, than she beheld before her.

"Upon coming up with me, she ordered her coach to stop. "Goodmorrow to you," said she. "Whither-to so early this morning; and on foot too?" The sight of her so confounded me, that blushing like crimson, I stood speechless for awhile; but at length replied, that I had only stept out for a little walk.

She ordered the door to be opened, and desired me to step into the coach to her; but I preferred the beauties of the morning on foot, I told her, far beyond being driv'd up in a coach, and wished her a good journey. She minded not to part with me so hastily; for, after two or three more denials, she insisted upon my

entering the coach to her: nor would she be said nay, till I had so done. I then began to complain, that she had used me so roughly before her servants, who would each in his turn despise me, when he should see how little account she made of me; for I was ready to burst with rage against her.

" Sister, said she, condemn me not now, for what you will hereafter be bound to pray for me; nor conclude me for your enemy, who am, and whom you will in future acknowledge to be your truest friend. I know the course you are taking; but believe me, however it may tend to the indulgence of your present passions, its way tends to hell and destruction, both to your body and soul.

" I have observed for these two days, that you had somewhat unjustifiable in hand by your downcast eye, and confused behaviour before me; than which none are surer prognostics of an unsound heart at bottom. This first put me upon my vigilance, for preventing the horrid deed you would perpetrate. As to your circumstances, child, said she, if my house be my table; if appearing in every degree as myself, both at home and abroad, is not satisfactory to you, make your demand upon

upon my purse too, within the bounds of modesty, and it shall be complyed with ; but let not my sister, my second self, involve herself, hand over head, body andoul, in such diabolical circumstances, as neither ages of tears may blot out from he book of divine wrath, or a whole life led in the most precise temporal œconomy, obliterate from the minds of your fellow creatures.

" Judge but, dear sister, added she, what you yourself would think of the like act, in another person, and then apply it o your own case, and behold therein the contempt and detestation all the world must view you with, as an infamous and perfidious woman, the scandal and disgrace of the species.

My heart beginning to grow mollified at what had been urged, and my sister then pressing me to protest, that I would maintain this pernicious correspondence no longer ; I clasped her hand, as the only member in my then situation that I could apply to my heart, and pressing it to my bosom, I burst into such a fit of weeping as is scarce to be paralleled.

" Oh ! my dearest sister, said I, you have convinced me, that of the most inveterate enemy, as I till now have esteemed

D 3 you,

you, you are become my most desirable friend. I will obey all that your prudence shall dictate. I have greatly erred, but will abandon all my follies to your discretion: then, O! forsake me not; but receive a repentant sister nearest to your heart, and henceforth dispose of me at your pleasure; and, as to the best of parents, you shall ever find me obedient to you."

" If that be the case, my dear, said my Sister, let us forthwith return home; from whence you shall write in a genteel manner to Mr. Readyman, desiring him to dispense with your absence to-day, somewhat having happened, from whence you beg to be excused receiving his furniture fits."

" Whatever you please, dear Sister, said I, that will I do; for I must from henceforth owe to you my whole secure well-being."

The Coach then turning about, I laid open the whole scene to her; and must confess, that my disappointment had the most gladsome effects upon me; when I came seriously to consider, that the intended transactions of that day might have been such a thorn in my side, ~~as~~ I should never more have been freed from ~~as~~ but

but in all probability have become a most reprobate and abandoned outcast.

Being now arrived at my sister's, my greatest difficulty was, to invent expressions adequate to the obligation I was under to her, and declarative of the satisfaction I abounded with; but my sister well knowing, that as Mr. Readyman was so soon to have met me, nothing could be more probable than his proceeding to her house upon missing me; diverted all other thoughts from my head, than of the letter that I was to stop his further progress by; for she dreaded his gaining my ear again, lest a relapse to my former purpose, might be the issue of another conference between us: so that placing pen and paper before me, she dictating to me, I wrote, my own head being under too much confusion for putting down my thoughts in any order.

Mrs. MARY RICHWOLD, to PETER
READYMAN, Esq; at home

SIR,

I take the utmost shame to myself for the unnecessary trouble I have given you this morning; but as no one can look into futurity, so neither can we always act up to the force of our own

resolutions, which obliges me to assure you, that an unforeseen event has not only prevented my meeting you this morning ; but must determine you to have no further thoughts of

Your humble Servant,
MARY RICHWOLD.

P. S. Any further attempt to see me at my sister's will be fruitless.

We dispatched away this by a servant on horseback, by the same road that I had taken ; with orders to give it to the gentleman whom he had lately seen two or three times at our house ; but that no answer being required, he would have no occasion to wait for one. We told him, that he would be sure to see the gentleman about such a place, if he met him not sooner.

At the servant's return he delivered me a letter ; and himself informed us, that when he came near to the place we had named to him, he there saw the gentleman's chariot and six with four servants mounted, all standing still, and seemingly waited for somebody on the road ; that he knew one of the servants, or he should have mistaken the gentleman himself, being dressed so far otherwise than he

he had ever before seen him : for his clothes were so covered with silver, as scarce to shew the ground of them.

That he rode up to the chariot, and delivered the letter, which the gentleman having read, he appeared under abundance of concern ; till at length, ordering his coachman to the White Lion inn, which was scarce two furlongs behind hem ; he also ordered him to follow that he might return an answer by him ; and that, he told us, was it.

No sooner had the servant dispatched his intelligence, than sending him forth, we broke open, and read Mr. Readyman's, as follows.

PETER READYMAN, Esq; to Mrs. MARY RICHWOLD.

My dear,

I must own, that the sight of yours, at a time when I could least have expected it, put me to so great trouble for the meaning of it ; that had I not been so positively forbidden, I should have sought for a reason from your own lips ; since though writing may, I trust, those would not, have perverted your real sentiments.

If the sudden alteration of that favour-

able opinion, I had flattered myself you had imbibed of me, is owing to the malice of some vile detractor; cursed be the tongue that uttered it: if to your own fancy only, I am content to acquiesce; since no promised happiness of my own, arriving to fruition, at the expence of a single moment's violence to your peace, can be supportable by

Your still admirer, and

Humble Servant

P. READYMAN.

My sister having desired that she might have the reading the above to me; at its conclusion, "Well, my dear," said she, "What effect has this letter upon you?" only replied I, from my sorrow that ever I gave occasion for it.

Indeed, replied she, I was fearful that this would prove the issue of it; and now, I suppose, you look upon me as your foe, for preventing your meeting this morning; and persuading you to write that which occasioned this."

" You was never more mistaken in your life," said I, " my disturbance arises not from the letter I sent, but from the previous steps I took, which caused not only this, but my own too. Not truly! sister, added I, my passions were

too

too prevalent, for less than your prudent advice, and uncontestable arguments to have vanquished ; but this, once effected, nothing less, than more convincing demonstration, shall ever byass me to relinquish them.

I had, it is true, said I, made my marriage with Mr. Readyman the sole platform, whereon I could ever hope to erect a substantial happiness ; and as to every it's eventual occurrences, I had oiled them over so, that upon the least hold that I laid upon them, destructive of the happiness I promised myself, they slipt through my fingers, as fears, and difficulties, untenable ; but since your home application to my reputation, to my conscience, to my religion, and Christianity ; I have viewed my proceedings therein to consummation, but as my first entrance into the jaws of hell, and every succeeding step I should have taken therein, as a further consignment of myself to eternal perdition. Wherefore, assure yourself, sister, added I, that as no person is less liable to recur to past errors, than he that is once thoroughly sensible of their malignity ; so no one can hold my own, in greater detestation, or possibly, esteem, another more valuably a friend, and that,

a sincere one too, than I do you, for reclaiming me from the overthrow I was so eager after, and have so narrowly escaped from.

Abundance of expressions of her joy for my real conversion, then succeeding; she said she would credit me, though she owned, she was doubtful at first, of my sincerity, and had conceived, that I might have complied with her the more readily, to deceive her at some other time, when she should have withdrawn her guard from over me; but since she hoped she was not now mistaken in me, she said, there was no reason, but that she, who had preached up strict justice to me, should accord to her own doctrines.

You know, my dear, added she, who I made you, as we two were in the coach together; that, in order to give you a certainty of future subsistence, in case of my death, or your leaving me, I would present you with somewhat, that should set you above the fear of poverty, and by prudent management, enable you to live wholly independant of all men, the sum you know, added she, I desire you to name; therefore, pray inform me, what you shall judge to be a desirable maintenance, and I will give it you.

I must confess, that notwithstanding all former aspiring of my inclination, even to such a degree as to have become insatiable ; yet, methought ! upon the light I had received into my own ways, and the detestation wherewith I then beheld them, my very soul was so satisfied, by an indraught of humility, as to be even confounded, at the nomination of over large expectations : so that sister, said I, as you are pleased to urge me to it, and I must speak : if you will be so good as to allow me one hundred pounds a year, I believe I can live as genteely upon that, as it will ever be in my power to have occasion for.

My sister smiled, your demands, said she, are abundantly abated ; but can you sincerely believe that, to be a competency adequate to your wants ? I do, said I. My transformation, has wrought a thorough conviction in me, that a dispulsion of all vain glory from my mind, will be the sole course, to establish me in tranquillity ; and whilst I can but account myself no more deserving than my neighbours ; why should I covet more than they ? nay, to one that has so much as I have, are there not forty who have it ? therefore, unless my merit was superior

superior to other people's why should I not amply, and thankfully content myself with that lot, which places me, though not at the head of, yet in the higher class, of my own species ?

My sister replied, that my sentiments were highly pleasing to her ; but as her presence was then required elsewhere, she would consider of my proposal, and give me her answer in a day or two : so that we now separating, each for our several chambers, I must declare, that having from calm reasoning, and reflection, subdued the rapacity of my passions ; I never, for many years before, had enjoyed like peace, and serenity of spirit, as my very soul was then filled with ; nor, had I not then experienced it, could I have conceived it possible, that my reformation from my prior errors, could have had such a desirable effect upon me.

C H A P. V.

critical moment not to be flipt. Excellence of good practices. Secret fruits of contentment. Mrs. Wrothless presents to her sister. Amazed at the same. Brings her to terms. Endeavours to find her husband. Letter to Wishall. His answer. Comments thereon.

HERE is a critical moment in the course of every man's life, though the most reprobate, and thoughtless of all, wherein the soul stands open to sound doctrine; wherein it will pleasurable imbibe it, and approve it; wherein, upon proper encouragement given, and due cherishing it as a desirable inmate, it will suffer it to take such root, as though it were often shaken by the turbulency of the affions, contending to eradicate it; yet, upon proper culture and improvement, it will not only withstand all storms, and tempests, but growing firmer by consequence, will outbrave the ruffles of the world, till it banishes them from their abitation for ever; and taking the reins into its own guidance, reigns predominant over

over the whole man, and thereby instigates him, to the constant pursuit, of n'aught but his substantial happiness.

This, I affirm, to be the case of every man, who, as I said, improves that critical moment; whereas he, who lets it pass unregarded by him, will probably, never, in the course of his whole life, meet again with the like opportunity; but for his neglect of the presenting benefit, will be condemned to a life of error, confusion, and distraction, which, for ever will denote him miserable.

I have frequently applied this to myself, who, by embracing my sister's maxims, from the conviction they convey to my senses, have, for many years, made with scarce any thing but success in all my enterprizes; whilst I look with horror, and astonishment, upon those steps which she diverted me from, and which had I obstinately pursued, as I intended, nothing could possibly have proceeded but shame, infamy, distress, prosecutions, and misery, as my portion, till welcome, and probably, untimely death, should put an end to my sufferings; nor could my exit then be made, but under the most excruciating perplexities.

Whenever my imagination took the above

above turn, as was daily the case, at the beginning of my reformation ; how have I praised the supreme being for his merciful direction, into so desirable a path, as his instrument, my sister, had placed me in ; nor would I have abandoned it, to have been mistress of any terrestrial principality, to be obtained by like practices, as I had before sat out with.

Now this way of thinking, giving me a real dependance upon providence for future blessings, kept all at peace within me ; notwithstanding, those wants still surrounded me, which had heretofore prompted me to such unbecoming practices, for their redress ; but though these were still present, I felt them not, at least, under the same anxiety for avoiding them ; nor appeared they to my then present fancy, in those destructive shapes, and agonizing forms, that they had done ; but my mind seeming to accord, in great measure, to my circumstances, I became as jocund, as ever, under my most flourishing expectations.

My sister perceiving my behaviour to be quite transformed, from a cloudy moseness, to a freedom of air, and sprightliness she been unacquainted with in me, it greatly delighted her ; but especially, for

for that my way of reasoning upon things was so foreign from what it had been, and so expressive of an acquiescence to my circumstances.

My dear, said she, I would hope, that the towering of your aims hath subsided in you, and that you are really, and from the heart, the easy woman you seem to be. I replied, that I absolutely was; nor would I revert to my former way of thinking, upon any consideration whatever. Then child, said she, you are now a proper object for riches, in that you will know when you have enough, & I hope, will make the right use of them for indeed! added she, it is not the bulk of a man's possessions that can make him happy; but the knowing when he ought to sit down contented, and cease asking after more: for till the appetite is fully sufficed, it is not all the addition in the universe, that can denote him happy.

I have been considering for some time, added she, upon your request of an hundred pounds a year; and—Nay, sister, replied I, in case you should think me too extravagant in my demand, who, but for your liberality, can have nothing? I also have been considering, that could lie in a snug, and pretty way now,

ough, for me who have made my own fortune, by my marriage, irreparable, as to any other state of life than of widowhood, upon a much less income than I had proposed to you: for really, upon serious reflection, the mere necessaries of life lye in a very narrow limit, when once one confines one's self to simple living; which, as I can never exceed, so am I determin'd, never more to aim at it, nor to regard gain or loss; and I am pleased at your reflections, said my sister, which I take to be very just, and agreeable; but sister, added she, as nothing is more certain, than that she will shun most in high life, who can confirm her views in low life to her circumstances, whether they are better or worse: So as I am now persuaded by you, I will not make a bad use of it, by launching into magnificence, I have purposed, rather to augment, than diminish your projected income, and with that view, have put a few notes into thy pocket for you, which, upon the present occasion, your acceptance of, will do me an honour, in that I shall have appropriated them to the deserv'g an object, in this instance. Putting then her hand into her pocket for a little book, she from thence, drew forth

papers, left finding them as I first sus-
pected, I should have shewn my diffi-
culty to her present, by my looks;
however, as it must be done one time or
other, and my impatience working strongly
ly in favour of the present, I boldly un-
folded one of them, which to my best
apprehension, was, of itself for one thou-
sand pounds: so that now, thinks I, the
all the rest are but hundreds; they will
come pretty near to my mark.

I then seized upon a second, which
proved also to be for a thousand pounds;
as all the rest, in short, were; till at
length, I became more confounded at the
extravagance of the sum, than I was at
first, doubtful of its sufficiency; even
till I had almost determined with myself,
that I must be under some delusion: for
that ten thousand pounds, could never
have been presented me under such an
air of indifference, as my sister had shewn
at delivering me that paper.

I was so perplexed in my mind about
it, never having been mistress of more
than two bank notes before, one of which
I had never inspected; that unable to
draw any certain conclusion from what I
had been examining, I resolved to go
down again to my sister, and rather ex-
pose

my own ignorance to her (who I assured, would take no advantage of folly to my detriment) by requiring information as to the true value of the s, than wavering in my own judge it, to remain in a total uncertainty.

I had not long waited in the parlour her return to me, before she came in, with the operation she had been upon; that the first discourse that passed between us, was, of the dangerous ailment her patient; then, what application she made to it, and lastly, what effects expected from it; but as my brains were overburdened with my own affair, ave so little heed to her tale, that I might, interruptedly, broach my own.

No sooner therefore, had she finished under my ha's! and good succeeded; than dear sister, said Jaugn t at the nescience of the novice you've here before you; but as you was eased to make me a present just now, hich your absence has given me an opportunity for looking into, I am at a great loss for it's real value: for it's value! my dear, said she; yes, sistes, replied Jaugn terein, remains my difficulty: for whilte judge from my eye only, it seems to be

ten thousand pounds, but when I apply to it, and judge of it by my understanding, I fear myself to be greatly mistaken, the extensiveness of it, being so disproportionate, to what I had required for my support.

My dear, said she, the understanding, not guided by the eye, is more liable to deception in things material, than the eye unassisted by the understanding; though where both coalesce to the object, they distinguish with the nicer perspicuity.

Your eye, you say, added she, denotes their worth to be ten thousand pounds; let then your understanding, go hand in hand with that member, and proclaim them of no less value to you; may you be happy with it, and rightly employ it in the service of your great master; who, pleased at your late reformation, has instigated me to the benefaction; nor will it cease here; play you but your part to deserve it from him, as I greatly hope, and little question but you will. I thought, added she, to have engaged you under compact with me, before I had given you that sum, had not at the instant slip'd my memory.

I beg'd her to inform me what compact she meant: for be it what it would

to

told her, nothing that she could require, would not be conceded by me, to such a generous benefactress.

She said, what she would have brought me under covenant for, was, that when I should find myself capable of subsisting at large, as I best pleased, I would never submit to, or encourage, any future addresses from any one ; but that as I was a married woman, I would always pass for such, though not in possession of any husband.

I told her, that there was less reason than ever for cautioning me against that foible ; since by her donation, she had removed every, the most potent occasion for such a proceeding ; in that, being now able to maintain myself, I had no attraction to the men for that purpose.

Being convinced of the amplitude of my sister's favour to me, for every the benefits of life ; my inclination naturally recurred to that object, from whom I had so lately disjoined myself, for no other cause, than for the want of them : so that I now began, to wish it would be possible for me, to discover my good fortune to my husband, that I might at the same time, invite him to the participation of it with me ; but after all the consi-

E deration

deration that I could muster up to the service, I was still as far to seek as ever, for means to recover him by.

It was not the length of time that we had been absent from each other, for that scarce exceeded two months ; but it was my ignorance of his family, his friends, his haunts, or any other method, whereby I might trace him out, if he should still remain in England ; but if, as he assured me he would, he should be already sailed for America, all possible pursuit after him thither must be fruitless ; until, if ever he should think to write to me, I should hear from himself of his settlement.

These cogitations, were the chief occupants of my intellects, for many months ; when at length, it coming into my head, that Mr. Vainlove, (who had first introduced my husband to me) as an intimate acquaintance of my spouse's, must certainly be able to inform me of his family, and familiars in town, from whom, I might possibly find him : I straightways wrote a few lines to him to that purpose, in the following manner.

Mrs.

Mrs. MARY RICHWOULD to Mr.
CHARLES VAINLOVE.

Sir,

OUR former acquaintance together, emboldens me to give you this trouble. You may remember, I married a friend of your's, before I quitted Oxford; but as both you and I were deceived in him, as to his substance; upon our arrival at London, we agreed upon parting, and did so.

I have now a particular occasion, for his benefit, to find him; but without a knowledge of some of his companions, or the places he most frequents in town, it will be an endless task for me to seek him.

As you therefore, Sir, are his particular friend, and the most likely person in my knowledge, to direct me in my pursuit of him; I hope, that the recollection of our past intimacy, may prevail for your answer to my above wants, which will for ever greatly oblige,

Your humble Servant,

MARY RICHWOULD.

I built great expectations upon Mr. Vainlove's answer to the above, as the most certain method I could have hit upon, for discovering my spouse by ; and at the return of the post, my heart leaped for joy, at the answer which was put into my hand. I had before informed my sister of my purpose, of re-uniting myself; if possible, to my husband, that I might be once settled in life, and behave as other married women did ; which she highly commended me for ; so that upon receipt of my letter, I ran up stairs with it, little questioning but I had gained my end by it.

I informed her, from whom I suspected it to come, and told her, if she pleased I would read it to her, and gain her advice how to proceed upon it.

Mr. CHARLES VAINLOVE to Mrs. MARY RICHWOLD.

Madam,

THAT I once thought you pretty, I shall admit, might have been an argument for my favouring any suit of your's ; but our former acquaintance, redounding so little to my satisfaction (through the haughtiness of your ambition) might have been left out of the scale,

scale, as a motive of my condescension to you.

I have only to say, Madam, that your rejection of the suit of him, who might, in short time, have maintained you like a gentlewoman, put me upon introducing to you, as the man of figure, and fortune you seemed to pine for, a flashy young fellow, whose father had been my taylor, and who himself, I perceived, to have run the little gleanings of his parents occupation, to the very lees; in order to demonstrate to you, and such vain-glorious triflers as you was, the difference, in the long run between men of estate and family, and such upstarts, as being neither, can yet, with the short sighted, appear to be both, or either.

What is become of the fellow I know not, I disclaiming all acquaintance with him, save that, for my own gratification, which I hope you have taken in such good part, as never to forget.

Brazen-Nose, Oxon, Your quondam Admirer,
5th Sept. 1757.

CHARLES VAINLOVE.

I grew so confounded, before I had read half way through the above, and

E 3 trembled

trembled so at Mr. Vainlove's ignominious treatment of me, that I could proceed no farther, till I had recollect'd, and given myself vent a little, by exclaiming against the author, as a treacherous villain, to offer at such an imposition upon me; but my sister, giving me a check for my impatience, asked me, what encouragement I had given Mr. Vainlove? and why I turned him off?

I replied, that taking him at first, for a man of fortune, I gave him all reasonable liberties, till finding that he had a farther living, I could have no further thoughts of him; for that he could not, at the present time, maintain me, in the manner I chose to live.

Well! Well! said she, if you first began the game, by casting him off, after hopes given; you must expect him to retort upon you, by way of retaliation. You, added she, without a fortune, would have drawn him in, with one; till you found it your interest to leave him. This ought not to have been done; for that, before any encouragement given on the lady's side, if she likes the man, and insists upon terms, without which she will not engage; those terms ought to be explained, and agreed to, before the least liberties,

liberties, as you call them, are granted ; it being an injurious thing to a lady's character, to fly off, after such liberties permitted ; nor indeed ! are these, allowable by a modest woman at all, till preliminaries settled, and the parties so united in affection, as nothing but the ceremony can be wanting, to oblige them more strictly to each other.

Concluding my sister's argument to be right, and that what Vainlove had done, was but a natural return for my unjust flight to him ; I went through with his letter ; when I wished from my soul, that I had been more considerate, than to have given him this second opportunity of triumphing over me ; but as I was much more mistress of my passions now, than heretofore, I passed all by, as a matter of my own seeking, in hopes of being more cautious for the future, how I should expose myself to any one whom I had before injured, for fear of the like return.

C H A P. VI.

*Oeconomy of Mrs. Wrothless's family.
Character of Mr. Godlyman. Descant on the necessity of marriage.
A courtship by deputy. Nothing like pleading one's own cause.*

SURELY! if such a thing is possible, as what I have often heard called an heaven upon earth; from the purity of it's œconomy, and the unmixed delectations that attend upon it; this, subsisted in my sister Wrothless's family: nor was I now incapable of receiving my full share of joy, and satisfaction at it; though I had heretofore condemned it, as a piece of mummery only, and introduced, without other real utility, than to cozen the undiscerning world, into an opinion of their sanctity, for procuring them a plausible reputation.

But with the mutation of my passions, I beheld these things far otherwise; nor was any one in the family ever more constant at, or more delighted with the daily prayers in my sister's chapel, both morning and evening, which upon no account were omitted, than myself: for ever since my

my brother's death almost, she had taken into her house a clergyman, one, whom she had selected from her own experience, as to both his morals and capacity.

As a poet, they say, must be born so; or otherwise, by art and industry, can only be faintly imitated; so also must a perfect clergyman: for as every man may form a verse, as to the sound, and measure, though far enough removed from the title of a poet; so any man may read, and pray too; whereas, the true spirit of both falls but to the share of very few, which renders them inestimably valuable; as the devotional energy of both, is preferable to the cursory performance of the task.

As to the preaching of Mr. Godlyman (that being his name) his discourses were not only from the life of religion, but so palpable and convincing, that a man must come purposely resolved against attention, or he must be held forcibly by the ear, till they had compelled his assent to them; one main ingredient most operative therein, being his firm persuasion, that the deliverer believed them himself, from both the stress he urged them with, the necessity he demonstrated for an adherence

nence to them, and the confidence he generally uttered them with.

The general propensity of all the inferiors of the house (from a constant attendance upon this good man, under so pious a woman as my sister at the head of them) to a strict adherence to their several duties, in their separate stations, and the alacrity shewn by each individual, both to their lady's person and service, would have induced a stranger, to have judged them all, but as several members of the same body, actuated by one soul only ; which exhibited so delightful a scene to me, now I had entered into a regular system of thinking, and judging ; that I resolved to live and dye with my sister, as the most eligible situation the whole globe could afford me ; nor seemed there the least probability, during her life, of any material variation of my prospect : so that had I been mistress of the universe, I never could have enjoyed myself more happily, than I then did with my sister.

I had now been six years settled with her, when she one day calling me into her chamber, after desiring me to shut the door after me, and to sit down ; my dear, said,

said she, you have often sought my advice in arduous cases ; and as frequently complimented me with your thanks, for the rectitude of my council, as you have pleased to call it ; so that having now upon my mind an affair, that I am more desirous of acting prudently in, than in any of the common occurrences of life ; as the consequences of this may be more grateful or oppressive than those, in most other regards can be to me ; I am willing to have your opinion of it, in so deliberate and serious a manner, as the nature of the case requires.

She pausing here for a few minutes, every faculty fell to work instantly, soon inventing a cause, worthy of being heralded in, with the solemnity of such serious preface ; but not being able divine into it, I replied that she was liable, she might command my whole powers to her service. That her deliberations had, undoubtedly, proved of theutmost consequence to me and my affairs ; insomuch that I should rather fly her judgment in my difficulties, than that of any other person ; but I made such question, whether her recourse to me, in like case, might be attended with equal success to her ; since I must confess

E 6 myself

myself so far her inferior, where any degree of penetration would be needful. However, I told her, that be her case what it would, she should be sure of my best endeavours to serve her.

Not a tythe of the circumlocution is ever practised by the female world, in any one other occurrence in life, as they make necessary, for expressing themselves to be in love; nor deflected my sister a single degree from the established rule: for presently finding her tongue again,

" My dear, said she to me, you are but too well apprised of the little enjoyment I have had in the marriage state with my late husband, Mr. Wrothless; I mean as to my own part, as a woman; not but that, having made it my choice to behave, in every respect to him, to the height of conjugal duty, and regard for his person, to whom I stood and yet stand infinitely indebted; I received all the satisfaction I could require from a punctual discharge of my duty to him and his interest, health, and well-being; and also from his love and affection for me: but then I say, child, added she, that failing in the hopes of children, which nature, in our formation, has furnished us with desires for, and tenderness solely applicable

applicable to ; besides the pleasure that every one must receive, from the prospect of heirs from their own bodies, to succeed them in their possessions ; you may imagine me to have suffered no light disappointment in."

" Now as to the marriage state, added she, when rightly conducted, between hearts affecting each other, and careful of their mutual interest, in health or fickness, wealth or poverty ; since it was ordained for the mutual solace of the sexes, originally ; and hath ever since been delivered down to us, through all generations, as an holy and sacred ordinance ; we must take it for granted, that it is highly favoured by heaven, and blessed according to its primary institution."

" You know, sister, added she, that the method most in vogue with mankind at this day, is not so much to consider the qualities of either sex by the other, upon their engaging in contracts of this nature ; though most certainly the first application ought to be to the virtue, piety, justice, temperance and disposition of the parties on both fides ; but these, I say, are now-a-days all postponed to pecuniary considerations : for what man is there of our whole

whole race, but upon a proposal made to him by his parent or friend, of a lady judged proper for his wife, that puts not the previous question of, what fortune has she? or what woman, who, in like case, demands not a particular of his rent roll, from whence she may expect her jointure? and these articles proving satisfactory, little further concern is had to his or her mental endowments; but, if they can bring it to bear, it's a match."

" What makes me the more prolix upon this head is, added she, the many unhappy marriages that arise from these mercenary considerations, which in my opinion ought to be avoided; but we women, though nature has formed us no less amorous than the men, or less susceptible of form, from an inclination to the person beloved, labour under a disadvantage, never to be surmounted by us; I mean, an incapacity for publishing our sentiments with effect: for should a lady but offer at the first declaration of her inclination, to the man in her favour; however he may before have regarded her, she would certainly be thereby expunged from his affection, as a licentious and immodest woman."

" This I say, added she, is such an hardship

hardship upon us, as requires us to make use of stratagem, in spite of our natures, and of common honesty and justice: for that the modes of the world demand compliance, where the matter consented to, is not positively criminal; and therefore in such cases we are obliged, if we would know the mind of the party, to whom we may not apply personally, to substitute a third person in our stead, to bring about, by sile advances, what we must not attempt by ourselves.

" You will wonder, my dear, added she, perhaps, what use all my discourse can tend to; but I am now come to the advice I must require of you, and that is, supposing me to have singled out a man by my affection, - in whom I can spy no blemish; whether, as I am but just thirty three years of age, I should ingage myself again with him, in the matrimonial tye or not?"

" Alas, sister, said I, it will be impossible for me to give advice in this case; which is so dependant upon your own will, that though I might esteem the person an angel, you might discover only the fiend in him; or should I look upon him as this, you may value him as an angel."

" I

" I mean not by my question, replied my sister, any more than a demand of your opinion, as to the act itself, exclusive of a particular person."

" I replied, that some were under a necessity of marriage, for the better transacting their affairs by a manly influence; others, for a faithful companion; others, for various reasons, none of which I judge to be without their force, where there was but a clear prospect, according to human reasoning, of a prosperous issue from it; but added my request, that as she had made me her confidant so far, she would also point out to me the object of her affection."

She said, she intended so to do, having purposed what had already passed, but as an introduction to it, and asked me my opinion of Mr. Godlyman.

I replied, that as to the worth of the man in his calling, it was inestimable; but that I presumed she would not so demean herself, with the estate she possessed, as to marry one of her own domesticks, whose sole provision in the world arose from her annual stipend to him.

" Child, said my sister, I perceive that whatever regard you may have for your Maker, you cannot totally withdraw your eye

eye from mammon yet; now I look no farther at that gentleman than his qualities, his mental excellencies; his truth, humility, and integrity; from whence I have the clearest prospect of an upright helpmate in him, as void of all guile as can be expected from man, and this is the reason of my esteem for him: but my dear, added she, having fixed my aim, the above difficulty of discovering it to him occurs to me, which can no ways be overcome but by the agency of a third person, to intervene between us.

" I think you can meet with no difficulty, added she, in the nomination of the person I would apply to for that pur-

; nor shall I make the least scruple declaring to you that you are that

on. I have often, with secret plea-

bore evidence of your colloquies

religious subjects, in all of which

ould hope you have received satis-

on from him: but I have also re-

ked you to have been often busy in

ourse together in the garden; when I

ume your topicks may have been on

me points.

Now, from your intimacy with him,

ld desire you, at some convenient

oppor-

opportunity, added she, to seem to wonder that I should have so long remained a widow, and how I could possibly withstand so many excellent offers as have been made to me; you will, from his answers be able to form your reply; but, should he seem to conclude that I am resolved against any future nuptials; assure him it is your belief to the contrary: for that was a sober, religious person, one, in whom the vanities of the world could find no place; a man of honour and probity, with the education of a gentleman, though without a penny in his pocket, to address me, you have not the least scruple, but I should submit to such an one without difficulty. You will by this hear what he says, and may act accordingly, said she; after which, pray apprise me of the particular result of your conference.

She then further asked me, What I thought of her marrying to Mr. Godlyman? to which I replied, if she could disregard the censures that the world might throw out at her, for under-rating herself by such a match, and had come to a resolution to marry; I could not see where it would be possible for her to pitch upon a man of sounder principles, and even

evener temper, or more promising for a good husband than himself; and as she had intrusted the breaking the affair to me, I would endeavour to execute my commission with the greatest punctuality imaginable for her service.

Many days had not passed, before the parson and I found ourselves alone in the parlour; my sister having, as I afterwards discovered, left us to ourselves, for the greater latitude in our coversation; when I began, as she had set me; and upon the parson's alledging, that he was perswaded my sister would not surrender herself to the best man breathing; "hold there, sir," said I, methinks you have nominated the very man to whom she would surrender herself." "Pardon me, madam, said he; I pretend not to pry into the lady's thoughts; I named nobody." "Yes sir, and I, but you did." "Excuse me, good lady, added he, if I unknowingly did; but it was as far from my design, as at present from my recollection."

"Sir, said I, did you not urge, that she would not surrender herself to the best man breathing?" I did so, indeed, replied he; then where erred I, in insisting upon it as my opinion she would, and to that very person only, demanded I."

Mr.

but that whatever, not of that kind, shou
escape her, which another woman mig
be expected, either to disguise, or pallia
for fear of incurring the world's censu
only ; that, she said, it would pride h
to boast of ; and assured me, that a
few days should pass, before she wou
convince me, that moral truth and h
nesty, both in speech and act, were pr
ferable to all the farcical chicanery, &
hypocrisy of the whole sex.

C H A P. VII.

*Reflection on custom. The lady court
her chaplain. Behind the curtain
Appears personally. Parson's ex
tasy. His pathetick prayer. Lad
shews cause. A condition. Ex
cessive generosity on both sides. She
marriage settlement.*

IT is one of the choicest blessings i
life, to have overcome the world
that is, to have subdued one's lust af
the follies of it, and all fear, from a tran
gression of it's customs, fashions, and il
founded politicks. How amiably in a
ey

eye, as a bye-strander, disinterested in the affair under transaction ; did my sister appear, when as a reasonable creature, affecting another of her own species, she fairly told Mr. Godlyman so ; and meeting him half way, presented to him her hand in marriage ; to what others of my sex would, whose inclinations, though they tended no less than her's, or probably, more prevalently to the same state ; yet under a thousand false pretences, and fraudulent shews of modesty ; formal declarations in hypocrisy, and absolutely in contradiction to their own conscience, would drive still to the same end at last, to which they must rather, for form sake, seem to be dragged, than step on voluntarily !

This was not my sister's case ; for about a week after my conference with the parson ; soon after dinner one day, she having ordered the wine to be left upon the table, and the servants out of the room : Mr. Godlyman, said she, how old are you ? he replied, in his fortieth year. I myself, said she, am thirty-three ; and begin to think, that if ever you take a wife, and myself another husband, it will be high time for us to look sharp out, left

lest in a few years more, we should grow despicable.

That you still live single, Madam, said he, I must beg leave to pronounce to be your own fault; as the many noble offers, and invitations to that state, you have in my memory withheld, will evidence; but as for my own part, fortune has limited me to celibacy only, unless I could be so ungenerous, as to see the good woman, whose affection would engage her in wedlock with me, reduced to the condition of starving.

You well know, Madam, added he, that my sole preferment is in your service; where, whilst I remain single, your goodness supports me, most eligibly, in your family; but were the case to be altered with me, I must either leave my wife, with whom I should choose to cohabit, or the asylum I enjoy under you; either of which, would equally distress me: so that since providence has pleased, that my lot should be cast in so fair a ground, my election shall rather be for a continuance in it, than to subject myself to distressful contingencies elsewhere.

I presume then, that your continuance with me, arises not from any aversion you may

may have from that state; but merely for your temporal emolument, said my sister. In very truth, it does so, replied he: for as to the marriage state itself (all benefits appendant concurring), it is not only honourable, but in a measure, a duty incumbent upon us; nor can a man, in my opinion, be said to be compleat without it, there is ever somewhat wanting to him, nor can he care less for the world, than that, in the general, for him; whereas the married man, though he may have his cares, they are divided, and consequently, diminished between him and his faithful partner.

Let what will happen to him abroad, he is sure of a welcome at home; and even in absence, leaves an heart behind him, ever anxious for his safety, and return. His children are his riches, nor can a prosperous event beset him, but he rejoices not with a single gladness; his good fortune communicating itself thro' each individual of his household, with whom, he participates equally, as they, with him.

By the warmth you express yourself with upon that state, Mr. Godlyman, my sister, one should suspect your

approbation of it, and that it is nothing but the want of a fat living, that restrains you from it.

My ambition soars not to the pinnacle of preferment, good Madam! replied he, for had I but the hundred a year that your bounty affords me, annexed to a certain benefice, that at all events must continue with my life; and had I but a few surplice fees, consequently, now and then, falling in to help out at a dead lift; my first step should be in search of some virtuous bride, with a trifle of cash to set us out with, to whom, I would wholly devote my future affections, 'till providence should please to call me hence; and with whom, I would hope to finish my course, in tranquility and happiness.

Your demands are the most humble, and modest, said my sister, that any one of your cloth could well have made; and pity it were, they should not be gratified. Now I have a benefice in my gift, which, though it should prove more ample in it's revenue than you mention, I presume, that, will prove no objection to you. This, I have for some

some time destined to you, subject but to a single proviso, which I would have you well to consider of, before you engage upon the living ; which is, that as you say you are resolved upon matrimony, the election of your lady, may be entirely submitted to me.

Madam, replied Mr. Godlyman, I have every reason that can well be assigned, for reposing all confidence in your choice, since I am fully persuaded, you would for no consideration, impose upon me a person, whom yourself should not esteem most agreeable to me, nor have I the least room for doubt of your discernment, more accurately, perhaps, than my own, in the qualities and endowments of the lady ; since, was I to love sincerely, and to none other would I engage myself, even this, might shadow over those defects from my eye, which would be apparent to you ; but as marriage is a matter of such consequence, as not lightly to be undertaken, I hope, you will not deny me a sight of, and small enquiry into the lady's character, and past behaviour in life, before I finally determine upon the choice of her : for though a good benefice, conjoined to a woman of my

own taste, would place me upon the summit of temporal felicity ; yet methinks ! I could by no means accept of that, with a wife, whom I could not perfectly enjoy it with ; but she, conspiring to my wish, I will promise to accept the person, being wholly at liberty, from all manner of prior engagements.

No sound upon earth could have been more musical to my sister's ear, than the few last words of Mr. Godlyman ; to which, and his past speech, she replied, that the lady she had to propose to him, was far from a stranger to him ; nor were her qualities, or endowments such as he had not long been acquainted with. All the matter, whereat she at all hesitated, she said, was, whether he could sincerely love her : for that she was as utter an enemy to imposed matches, as he could be : for which reason, after she had nominated her person to him, he should be at his option to receive her, or not ; upon this further condition, that if he did not, his lips should be for ever fast locked, against every thing that had passed between them, or should further be discovered by him, relative thereto.

Mr. Godlyman, having seriously promised

mised compliance ; Sir, said she, the benefice that I have mentioned to you, is my estate ; and the lady to be proposed to you, myself ; now therefore, confer with my sister, how far these may prove agreeable to you. She perfectly knows my pleasure, and will communicate your answer to me ; for it becomes not me, longer, to be present with you ; since the late declaration of my sentiments.

My sister being then about to quit the room to us, Mr. Godlyman rising from his chair, and opposing her : dearest lady, said he, your words, still sounding with heavenly transport in my ears, have inspired my soul with extatrick sensations ; the reverse of which, upon your so sudden disappearance, succeeding, must overwhelm me with agonizing despair.

O ! Once more certify me, that my ears mistook not your words ; my senses your meaning ! drop them like balmy nectar on my heart ;—confirm me in the kiss my soul abounds with ;—submit not at answer to another's carriage, which from your sister's mouth, must lose it's energy ;—then, dearest, and best of ladies, credit those pure, unutterable joys, so stationed in my heart, irradicably,

never to be disjoined from the enjoyment of yourself, by me.

O ! dearest,—best of women, added he, hesitate not at the perdurable affection of him, who has so long stood in all humility in your presence, in admiration of your adorable virtues ! —thou most compleat of the human species ! —associate meet for angels ! —canst thou descend, so far beneath the superior orb thou art placed in, as even to behold, so despicable a wretch as I am ? —but canst thou love me too ? —O excellence ! —how am I rapt in delight, and transport, when I conceive, how amply the supreme arm means to repay, every my unworthy endeavours in his service ! —for that this concession of your's proceeds from it's direction, I am well assured ; since it were impossible, for the unassisted human mind, to have submitted to the disparity between us.. —To thee, added he, great rector, therefore, for ever be the praise (as primarily due) first tendered ; then, to this dear lady, as thine instrument, on whom, and me, by thine hand joined, diffuse thy choicest blessings.—Let the love abounding in the celestial choir, pure, and unruffled by the intervention of doubts,

doubts, jealousies, or anxiety, become inseparable from our beings :—may we for life, be only conspicuous, for every humane quality, both between ourselves and to all mankind.—May we enjoy an offspring to succeed us in their praises, to thee, for the derivation of their beings from our union.—May the poor around us, the peculiar care of thee, our common benefactor, bless us, and thee, for the distribution of thy benefits to them ; and may our family and dependants find thy great name, for placing them, under our examples, in the path to everlasting happiness.

To the above, my sister added a loud Amen, which I seconded ; then, beginning both to speak more unconfined upon the subject ; said my sister, I hope Sir, you will do me the justice, not to ascribe my proceedings of this day, to any levity in my temper, or wantonness in my constitution ; but to their genuine source, an harmonious society, which no state but that of wedlock can afford, and an hope of offspring, to be nurtured by us in all piety, virtue, and sobriety ; without the exertion of our faculties in which care, I cannot persuade myself, that I have exercised

cised myself sufficiently, to my munificent patron's glory. Then Sir, added she, believe me I have made you my choice, as the best qualified instrument for providing for, and preserving my own felicity, and perfecting the other desirable views I have propos'd to myself.

You will excuse me, dear sir, said she, though I should a little play the tyrant with you, according to my sex's custom, whilst the reins are in my own hand : for when once the indissoluble knot shall be tyed between us, it may be too late to insist upon conditions, as the staff of authority, will then have changed hands ; and my turn will rather be to take, than give law.

Dear lady ! said he, you have but to command, both now and hereafter, to be obeyed by me ; nor can I suspect, that an engagement so disinterestedly undertaken on your part, can ever so transmute nature itself, and the solid principles your actions have ever been conducted by, as to cause my demur to any injunction of your's ; but may I be so free as to ask, wherein you would tyrannize over me ; and what dreadful condition you would confine me to ?

Nay,

Nay, added she, I hope it will be nothing disagreeable to you; but, however, since conditions may sound too harsh to your ears, as really they do to my own; I would then, thus early petition to you, for your own sake, mine, and my dear family's, that when we shall become man and wife, you will not desist from your present function, of praying with, and instructing us; for that, the change will be infinitely disadvantageous to us all, should we, by my acquirest of an husband, lose the prospect of our everlasting inheritance.

This, Madam, said Mr. Godlyman, you cannot more strenuously insist upon, than I with all alacrity assent to; as I shall then have the stricter obligation upon me for its performance. The souls, which may now be called your's, will then be my own, in a double sense; nor shall it ever be laid to my charge, that for any temporal advantage whatsoever, I have willingly suffered their miscarriage.

I confess, added he, I had far variant conjectures, about the conditions you mentioned; but whatever, relative to these, you had proposed, it had been my duty to have complied with.

I must intreat you, Sir, said my sister, that you would explain your meaning to me: for as yet, I am wholly in the dark therein. Madam, replied he, I apprehended your conditions would have extended to the settlement of your estate; which, in whatever manner, or under whatever restrictions, or limitations, you please to confine it to, I shall perfectly acquiesce with; having such confidence in your generosity, as to be inscrupulous, about the sufficiency you will allot for my support, in case you should be summoned hence before me.

Alas! Sir, said my sister, my opinion has ever been, that these sticklers for advantages over each other, before they come together, have ever some latent seeds of dissatisfaction upon their minds, which, but for the benefit to arise from the match, would undoubtedly have kept them asunder; nor are we to wonder that so many infelicitous marriages proceed, from the many prior articles, and covenants, beforehand, that the parties afterwards, would hang, but to annul; nor arise the disadvantages of that state more from any one thing, I am fully persuaded, than from this cramp put upon them, before wedlock.

For

For my part, added she, as they have ever been my aversion, I have been the more studious of the object, to whom I may intrust what I have ; it having ever been determined by me, never to deliver the possession of my person into the custody of that man, in whom I would not confide, for the management of my substance. If I should be deceived in my expectations, as it will proceed from my own choice, I had rather suffer, for reposing an over credit in my husband, than to consent beforehand, to the least suspicion of his proving an imposter.

I could not forbear urging, the necessity of settlements, in case of children between the parties ; but my sister replied, that would any woman trust herself, to the father, she could not trust her child too ? Every parent, added she, is a far better judge, after his children are grown up, of their natures, and dispositions, and whether they are most inclinable to virtue, or vice, duty, or disobedience; than he can be before they are born. What then, can he reward these, or punish the others by, but from an unequal disposing of his estate to them, according to their demerits, or deserving? but to

wave these points, wherein I am perfectly clear ; I will have no articles between us ; only, thus far let us understand each other, that in case both die without having issue between us, the survivor shall divide the estate ; one moiety to my relations, the other to my husband's. As to every other disposition of it in our lives time, it will be early enough to consider the manner, as cases and occurrences happen.

Mr. Godlyman, not judging that the time, when this marriage should be consummated, would come so well from my sister's request, as his own ; after having acknowledged the obligation he should for ever remain under to her, for the favours of that day ; hoped, he said, he might be permitted to a certainty, when his expectations of so sublime a blessing as had been promised him, might be accomplished.

To this, my sister, without the least further consideration, replied, that she was at his service, whenever he pleased to appoint ; but this put the parson more to a nonplus, than all that had before happened : for that, if he should name the next day, she might think him impertinently

nently intruding upon her ; and if he should defer it too long, neglectful of her ; so that taking a middle course, he replied, that as his happiness was to be conferred by her, so he must leave to her own choice, the time of granting it : but thus much, he must aver from his heart, that it could not be bestowed, too early for his inclination.

Upon this, my sister demanding which would he most grateful to him, either the deferring it for a week, five days, or three? Madam ! said he, people's last words, usually proceeding from more deliberation than their former ; if you please, let the last be the term, to which she having consented, we parted, to prepare ourselves for the ceremony.

C H A P. VIII.

*The exercise of the parson and lady.
Why women don't make love. Why
women are insincere. Are married.
Servants congratulate their master.
Mrs. Richwould stays with them.
Manner of living. Letter from her
husband. Of his good fortune. Calls
her over to him.*

I Soon followed my sister to her chamber, to have discoursed her upon what had passed at the late conference; but found her lock'd into her closet, to which she had retired to beg a blessing upon what had been agreed upon; nor stirred she from thence, till she was called down to supper.

We now waited for Mr. Godlyman, who, contrary to what he had ever before done, detained us above a quarter of an hour, before he approached us to bless the viands. This my sister wondering at, so soon as we were seated, asked him, If his not being well had kept him above so long? but we both presently perceived, that it was out of his power to answer us, without exposing himself to the servants about

about us ; for his eyes were as red as blood, and he had most apparently to our thinking, been crying ; so that he remaining silent, we said no more to him, till after the cloth was removed ; when my sister asked him, How he did ? to which he replied, with tears just issuing, " never better, I thank you madam.

" Truly, sir, said I, my fear was, at your first entering the room, that you had been suffering under some disorder, by the discomposed air of your countenance ; but am glad to hear it is otherwise."

Ladies, said that good man, when I left you, it was with an heart overcharged with the Almighty's benevolence to me, to such a degree as to be insufferable by me ; till I had discharged myself of its weight by my humblest remonstrances to him, of all present and past mercies ; my thanksgiving for the bounties bestowed upon me, and my fervent petition for grace, to conduct me therein to his glory.

" A grateful heart, added he, requires more issues to express its sense of favours by, than from the lips ; the eye comes in to its aid not unfrequently ; now this proving my case, I could no sooner discharge the streams flowing from thence, than I did, which occasioned my overstaying

staying my call to-night ; nor having put myself under constraint, that I might come when I did, could I have answered to your questions at the table, without bursting out afresh again, upon any consideration ; “ but dear lady, said he, turning to my sister, your indulgence, in ceasing to urge my reply, will be ever recollect'd with acknowledgments.

Nothing more than usual passing between them that evening, I shall hasten to some discourse that happened between my sister and me the next day.

Upon going into her dressing room to her, where she was upon a piece of work; my dear, said I, how could you behave with such intrepidity to Mr. Godlyman yesterday ? “ intrepidity, child, said she; why, was there any thing that passed between us, that either of us need be afraid, or ashamed of ? ” “ I am sure, said I, I could not have acted as you did, without blushing like the scarlet dye ; nay, I don't think I could have gone through with it as you did, upon any account whatever.”

“ Custom and education, child ! all affectation ! nothing else, said she, why are we not of the same species of creatures? covet we not each other's society, as more relishable to each than one of our own sex ? ”

sex? If then we were designed one for the other, what right have we to pervert that design, at least to make a false shew, as if what was intended us by our maker himself, was criminal?"

What a merry conceit is it, think you, to behold a lady almost dying for her lover, whilst she frowns, blushing, as you call it, and is frightened almost into fits, if he mentions but matrimony to her? Is not this downright farce? Why has man the preheminence; so far as to make his requests known to a lady he admires, and not she the same liberty for his information? but merely from custom, first taught to our mothers by theirs, and by them to us; and we make fools each of other, for all ensuing generations: so that she, who confesses her regard for a man, must be reputed immodest, whilst she may be as chaste as a vestal, who goes to bed with him; now, though this is all a piece of grimace, and every woman, from her own heart, knows it to be so; yet it is so generally reduced to practice, as if each really credited, what she must from her heart condemn herself for.

" How then, added she, can women, after wedlock, be expected to act with sincerity, who have so constantly declined the

the practice before hand? nor can I see, from my heart, how a man can expect his wife to be honest to him, who, till the very ceremony is past upon them, belies her own heart in her every action to him.

"I believe Mr. Godlyman will make me a good husband, and therefore I told him so, continued she; and thereupon we have agreed upon the experiment, and have finished as much business in an hour, as some others are canvassing for an age; nor varies the end of our labours a jot; we both get husbands. Is it not therefore more eligible to dispatch an agreeable enterprize, than to linger on, till each party tired with delay, grow cool and indifferent upon the subject?"

I asked her, whether she made nothing new upon the occasion? no, she said, she could see no reason for it; since she might have such when she pleased; and besides, the plainer the better, she thought, for a parson's wife; but added, that she had an exquisite suit in the piece by her, which, if I would make up for the wedding, she would present me with.

I thanked her, and assured her I would wear it, in remembrance of the happy day; nor would I ever part with it, so long as I lived, for her sake. She

She said, she had been thinking where she should be married, but had not yet determined upon the church ; nor would I resolve upon any, said I, but my own chapel ; you may have a dispensation for the purpose, and Mr. Godlyman has friends enough, I don't doubt, who will be proud of giving you a cast of their office.

She told me, it did not suit her ; for that, though she chose not a publick wedding, yet she should regret being married in an unaccustomed place.

At length she pitched upon the cathedral at Gloucester, and accordingly we ovided for it ; and on the morning pre-pointed, no soul but myself attending em, we fallied forth, and returning to ir coaches from the church door, were ack again by dinner time.

The alteration in the family was no longer a secret, than till the return of the servants who had attended us ; when a sort of mutual satisfaction arising in every face, from their expected blessings, under the direction of their new master ; the whole family begged leave to congratulate him and their lady upon the affair ; and did so, when my sister, who had intended no manner of festivity upon the occasion, soon

soon found, that her domesticks were not to be put off so: for they all protested, that though their master and lady would contribute nothing to their rejoicings, they would celebrate the occasion at their own expence; rather than to suffer which, as handsome an entertainment was ordered, as could possibly upon such short warning be procured, and the day concluded in the most innocent mirth and jollity.

I had so long lived happily in my sister's family, that though every one else rejoiced at this wedding, I knew not whether it were best for me to be too sanguine at it, or not; for though I might be an agreeable companion enough for my sister, whilst sole; yet, how I might be relished as such, now she had procured her a more eligible intimate, I could not say; but because I was willing to have the sense of both of them, previous to any confabulation about me, by themselves; I, the very day after the wedding, put it to them both, whether it was their pleasure, that I should continue with them any longer, or look out for some apartment for myself.

My dear, said Mrs. Godlyman, do you hear my sister? I do, said he, and had answered her, but that I knew not whether any conference had passed between you and her

pon that head already. Not a word, replied. Then, dear sister, said Mr. yman, you will never be less welcome ; than you have hitherto been to my nor to me, child, said my sister, than appear to be to my husband ; so that uarters seeming to be absolutely eft-
d, I became perfectly easy ; nor
I the least alteration in either of towards me, or in my own circum-
s, save that whereas most of my time ofore had been occupied in the com-
of my sister, I had now far more e upon my hands, and was at li-
to go where I would, without ast fear of disobliging her ; for that Godlyman and she, when out of their al closets, were scarce ever asunder.
e love and indulgence that were tally paid between my brother and , could not but remind me, how y I might have been, in the enjoy-
of my husband, had our circum-
es at first suited ; and indeed, how d we might yet be, could I but dis-
his residence. These thoughts, I allow to have perplexed me not a when I daily beheld such a fond is my brother and sister, regaling in mutual affection ; whilst I seemed to

to stand but for a cypher in the family : but yet I was so courteously treated by them, that it would be impossible for me to mend myself.

Thus lingered on my time for the three first years of their nuptials, till my sister was become the mother of two children, a girl, and a boy, which were severally named, after her and him, Leticia and Paul ; but never sure entered a happier pair into the bonds of wedlock ; nor ever man more chearfully performed his promise, even, as when he was only chaplain himself. The daily service was never omitted by him, and twice every sunday he preached not only to his own family, but for all such poor neighbours as would attend him in the morning, a table was spread, that after dinner they might, upon no pretence, avoid the afternoon service too : but as to publick visiting, my sister finding it incommodious, for that it broke in upon the order of the houshold ; both she and my brother soon left it off, as to the formality of it : but all such of their acquaintance as would spend days or weeks with them, and be conformable to their rules, could nowhere find a more hearty welcome.

In short, their whole time passed in a
series

series of humane and benevolent actions to their friends and neighbours, and of virtuous and religious acts to the praise of their maker, and peace of their own minds.

In the fourth year of their nuptials, when I had given over all thoughts of Mr. Richwould, or of ever marrying again; but of wholly annexing myself to my sister, as a standard in her family; came a foreign letter to me, as the post-man said it was; but upon the view of it, not at all recollecting my husband's hand, I suspected it to be wrote by some one, whom he had intrusted with orders to inform me of his death, as he had, at our parting, engaged to do.

I even trembled whilst I broke it open; nor could I refrain from tears, at the news I expected to hear of his being no more; though I had heretofore longed for no more grateful intelligence.

There must be somewhat in matrimony more than we are in the general apprized of, that should transfer the pleasures and misfortunes of either party to other, though at ever so great a distance; and recalling past endearments, affect them beyond all that is due to the strictest amity

amity and intimacy between other persons.

This sense I then had of the death of my husband, which I disputed not, but this letter before me would convey to me ; so that spreading it forth, as I usually did in like cases, I sought for the writer's name, that I might carry the idea of somebody in my mind, through the perusal of it ; but how was I surprized, when in the place of the stranger I looked for, I found the name of my dear husband !

Past scenes then recurring to my fancy, I became so sunk in my spirits, when I reflected that he might still berecoverable, though at an immense loss of time, at the distance he must be from me, that I could scarce peruse the writing ; but at length I finished it, and shall here lay it before my reader in his own words.

Mr. GEORGE RICHWOULD to Mrs.
MARY RICHWOULD.

My Dearest Life,

IF still you subsist, to be so called and esteemed by me ; I left England about three weeks after you parted from me for Gloucestershire ; and in about nine more,

I arrived at Antigua, whitherto, you know, or to some other of our British plantations, I was bound, in order to pick up that subsistence I despaired of, whilst remaining in England.

I took clear thirty-five pounds in my pocket, after having disbursed the whole remainder of my stock upon necessaries for my voyage, and some few things that I had hopes of turning to better account at my debarking, than ready money.

Our captain, having some very long and intricate accounts to settle, during our voyage, upon the experiment found himself deficient for the purpose; when having no hand on board adequate to the work, and expressing his concern to me one day, for the time that he must lose in the payment of a large balance that would be due to him, if his accounts were not finished before his landing; I being a very ready penman, assured him, that if he would commit the affair to my management, I would engage to adjust to his satisfaction.

My offer was so joyfully received by him, that as an encouragement for me to proceed with alacrity and all becoming speed, he promised me, that upon settling the account, he would not

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only befriend me all that should be in his power, when we reached the shore; but would also give me my diet and passage free.

This was such an outset as I had little room for expecting; but however, upon my adjusting and clearing up the account, to such an exactness as I soon made him sensible of, he renewed his engagements to me; and, upon our arrival, not only released me from the whole charge of my voyage, but so effectually recommended me to an eminent planter there, and one of the council, for a most accurate man at figures, that I had not been six days on shore, before I was taken into his house, at fifty pounds a year, money here, and my board.

My reflections now turning to my past life, I considered what had already passed away, as employed upon purposes wholly foreign to the intent of living; and from thenceforth determined with myself to observe a strict justice and integrity in all thy transactions with my master, and whomsoever I might have to do; to be careful of my earlings, and vigilant in my business; to be sober and industrious in what course soever I should be employed,

ployed, and to make it daily a part of my busness, to implore a blessing upon my endeavours, and to be thankful to that Being which had excited my mind to these laudable undertakings.

I remained with my master for two years, till his death ; by which time I had gained such a reputation for my diligence, penetration, and abilities, that upon his decease I was courted by several other planters, to engage with them at any wages I should nominate; but having received so many civilities from my late master, I determined to remain with his widow, who voluntarily offered to augment my salary to an hundred pounds per annum.

She soon perceiving how indebted she was to my management, thought nothing that she could bestow upon me too ample a reward for my services ; till after I had served her for about six years, I perceived plainly that her design was for bestowing herself upon me, by the many broad hints she afforded me.

Her both speeches and actions, now proclaiming her intentions, too apparently for me to be deceived, I had determined with myself to quit her service ; or my own conscience then dictated to

me, that notwithstanding the prodigious advancement of my circumstances by such means, having, as I hoped, a wife in you, my dear, in England; I should never possess my riches in happiness, and with a peaceable mind; so that had she proceeded in her purpose for entrapping me, I should have avoided the temptation, by deserting her affairs entirely; but in a few weeks after this, she catching cold, was seized with a fever, which her physician pronouncing dangerous, she made her will, and having no child, devised all her plantations, stock, money, negroes, and all that she was worth, to the amount of between twenty and thirty thousand pounds sterling to me, who am now in the peaceable enjoyment of them; I had wrote sooner to you, but that I had lost your direction by some means or other, and therefore despaired of any letter finding you.

I was under this perplexity for near twelve months, when one day, as I was sorting some old papers and letters, in order to cast away the refuse, and retain only such as might probably be, in future, useful to me, I was obliged for that purpose to peruse them all; when upon unfolding one of them, my very heart leaped

leaped with joy at the sight of your directions, under your own hand. I write this therefore to you, in hopes, as providence has so highly favoured me, my ever dear wife will make no difficulty of crossing the seas, to participate of every blessing in life with an husband, who now, more than ever, esteems and admires her.

Methinks, my dear, all that I enjoy is insignificant to me, without the one only thing necessary to compleat my happiness; nor can all the persons upon earth administer that to me, but your dear self. Fail not therefore, I again and again intreat you, to put yourself upon the voyage to me: for I can have no peace till I see you. If leaving your own country for this foreign shore, should seem an insupportable hardship to you, still comfort yourself with the assurance of returning to it in a few years again: for that my resolution is, not to continue here longer than till I have made up my present fortune, to the value of forty thousand pounds, when I will sell my plantation, and returning with you to our mother country, we will enjoy ourselves in affluence, till providence shall please to call us hence.

I believe, that before I can receive your answer I shall be called to the council: for there are very few plantations on the island equal mine in value; and I am as much respected here as any one of the planters: so that let not my life despise our way of living here: for though the country may not be so grateful to you as old England, yet, believe me, you will maintain the state of an English dutchess here, which you cannot expect, with six times my wealth in England.

You may come over to me by captain Boyce, who will tarry six weeks in England, at the port of London, and by whom I entrust this to you: so that you will have time enough for your preparations; and I have given him an unlimited order, for supplying you with whatever you may stand in need of for the voyage; but let me especially recommend to you as fine cloaths as you can lay your hands upon, and plenty of them; for that, at your first appearance here, I would have you make no less sumptuous a figure, than the gayest lady among us.

If ever this reaches my dear wife's hands, which may providence direct in safety, and you are still living, after so long an absence between us, you will

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consider, with what diffidence I wrote this, lest it should have no effect, and that nothing but the longing desire I abound with, of a reunion between us, could have encouraged me to the drawing it out to the length I have done.

Let not then any private interest, dread or other difficulty whatsoever (if living and in health) prevent my dearest life from presenting herself to the craving embraces of her

Most truly loving and
affectionate husband,
GEORGE RICHWOULD.

C H A P. IX.

*Almost wild upon her husband's letter.
Variety of the concern, where interest
or none. Fair promises keep her at
home. Resolves to visit captain Boyce.
Answers her husband's letter.*

I Even flew with this letter to my sister, who perceiving the confusion of my behaviour, grew fearful, lest some strange event had happened; but I kept her not long in suspence: for instantly extending my hand with the letter in it; it is from

my husband, my dear, said I, it is from my husband.

My sister, with her usual gravity, cry'd, Well! what then! Where is he? read it, read it, said I, O ! the dear soul!--he's become a great man, my dear, said I, ay and a good one too—my very heart will split with joy—What would you advise me to ? my dear—Now I have need of your council, if ever woman had.

I kept thus raving on, sometimes speaking, sometimes crying, sometimes rejoicing, whilst my sister was reading the letter ; which though I coveted above all things to have her mistress of, yet I grudged her every moment's time that she employed upon it : for I was even wild, till I should be consulting with her upon its contents ; whilst she, with her deliberate air, sat considering upon every word and sentence in it.

At length, I was so out of patience at her, that I begg'd her only to say, whether I should cross the seas to my husband or not. Prithee, child, said she, ask me no impertinent questions till I have finished it. Why ? I scarce know whether he is there himself yet.

My brother coming in at the same time,

time, I left my sister at more liberty for proceeding, than I had before given her: for running up to him, my dear brother, said I, my husband has wrote to me; he is living and well, and a great man. It is what I should have gueffed, as a spectator only of the pleasure he has given you, said he, and I rejoice in your joy, I'll assure you, sister; but now the question will be, said I, whether I shall go over to Antigua to him? that, replied he, I am not able to say, till I have first heard what inducements you may have to the voyage; Why? I tell you brother, said I, he has got plantations, and stocks and negroes, and such things as you would be amazed at, and is to be a counsellor, and I can't remember a quarter of it.

A counsellor! said my brother; Is he qualified for a counsellor? why he's quaified for any thing, you see brother, answered I, he is so vastly rich; and—Lord! I wish my sister had done, that you might see what he is;—and he says, must live there like any dutchess in England, and bring over vast fine clothes with.—Nay, captain, what's his name, in letter, he says, is to give me as much money as ever as I will, to set me out.—

Well! it is the most loving creature sure?—a body can never do enough for such a man—my sister will never have done, I think.—I long for you to read it, brother.—All the matter will be, when I am to go—Have not you done yet? sister—

I am considering, my dear, said she, how this case stands—bless me, said I, the case is as plain as the nose in one's face—I am to go and partake of his grandeur—and now the case is, How soon?—It is not plain yet to me, replied my sister, that you need to go at all—Why? where are your eyes, your senses? said I, don't he invite me over?—Nay, the poor dear soul can't have the least peace till I come—It might be the death of him should I refuse him.

Turning then to my brother, I should have heard from him long enough ago, said I, but poor man he had mislaid my directions—Well! it was the most fortunate affair in the world, that he ever found them again, or we might never have had a chance for meeting more: then he has found them now, said my brother—and by the merest casualty in all nature too, said I; for happening to be looking over some old musty papers, there he spied them; good luck! said my brother;

brother ; too common a case, where men are forgetful, or act not with prudential caution.

By this time, my sister having finished the letter, and delivered it over to my brother's perusal, my tongue, that had lain still scarce a moment since I had been with them, applied itself again to my sister, for her advice, how I should best prepare myself for my voyage.

'Look'ee ! sister, said she, if my sentiments may at all prevail with you, they are for your staying at home.—I would have you write to my brother by the return of captain Boyce ; inform him of your life, and health, your desire for his coming home to you, and that you think, he, having acquired so handsome a fortune already, need not be solicitous for more : for that, with what you have ready for him here, both together, will amount to near the sum he requires.

I hate to hear any body state other folk's cases, as if neither themselves, or any one else had an interest in them, said I, why? if his mind is set upon forty thousand pounds, can any body make me believe, that for a few words of mine, he will return without it?

You are to try, said my sister, what
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may be done by a letter, before you venture to expose yourself to the mercy of so unsettled an element as the sea, wherein if you should be cast away, where then will be all your hopes of your husband?

I begged her not to terrify me with such dreadful thoughts, for if every evil, attendant upon the most innocent action in life, was to be realized, no one would be able to undertake any thing.

When my brother had read the letter, he was fully of my sister's opinion, that my husband, having so much already, and wanting but to extend it to a determinate sum, would make no scruple of forthwith settling his effects, and returning to me, could he but be sure that what I possessed, would so nearly compleat the sum required by him.

I could gladly have been persuaded of that: for I had ever an aversion to the water; though, in my then way of thinking, I could have ran both through that and the fire too, to have gained my husband by it; but not being able to submit to their arguments, and the fear of protracting the time of our meeting, necessarily, in case he should insist upon raising the sum mentioned by him, prevailing over every other consideration, I

plainly proclaimed my fears, and also my fixed resolution for departing to him.

My good sister, still willing to detain me, but perceiving that her reasonings only would be too weak for the purpose, my dear, said she, with Mr. Godlyman's leave, you shall write to my brother, that having had a run of good fortune also since he left you, you hope he will concern himself no longer about money getting abroad, but dispose of his affairs in the speediest manner, and return to you; where, as he has fixed his ambition to a particular number of thousands, between twenty and thirty of which he already possesses, you will, upon his return to you, make up the forty to him, let the deficiency be what it will; I'll engage for it, that if ever he intends to come over, this will fetch him.

I hope, my dear, said my brother, that you take not me for a pope, that can dispense with my sister for writing such a falsity to her husband, by your saying, by my leave, she shall write so and so to him. No, no, said my sister, I took you for no such person, in the sense you apply to it; though for one no less infallible, according to my own interpretation of my meaning. As how? pray, said my brother;

brother ; why replied she, my sister has but ten thousand pounds, which will leave a deficiency in the sum required ; but with your leave, we will make that deficiency up to her, let it be what it will.

I stand convicted, said my brother, and ask pardon for my hasty judgment ; and as to the matter, as you state it, be it as you propose.

Never was a more speedy transition from one resolution to its opposite, than in the case now before us : for scarce had the words sounded in my ears, before all thoughts of my voyage were vanished. I kissed and thanked them both a thousand times over, declaring what new life they had put into me, since I apprehended my sailing might be spared me ; for that, upon no other account whatsoever, would I have attempted to traverse the ocean, than of meeting my dear husband there.

Having laid aside my voyage, I grew quite restless for a sight of captain Boyce, who must undoubtedly be acquainted with my husband, by the commission he was intrusted with to me ; and though I had heard as much of my husband's affairs as I well could, from his letter, yet that, or ten times more under his own hand in writing,

writing, would not prove so satisfactory to me as a long conference with the captain, to whom I could put what questions I pleased, and occasionally vary them from his answers. I wanted to know how the country agreed with Mr. Richwould; whether it had changed his complexion from the fair I remembered him, to a brown hue, and to what degree; whether he was so slimme as when I left him, or grown more corpulent and burley; with a million of other queries, I had to propose, as they should arrive at the stage of my curiosity; so that I could obtain no peace to my mind, till I should see him.

I disclosed my discontent to my brother and sister, who would fain have dissuaded me from such an attempt, as a trifling inquisitiveness, which would answer but very little purpose, and occasion me an abundance of fatigue and expence; but all that could be urged to the contrary would not rein in the violence of my appetite, for the darling enjoyment I promised myself from it: besides which, though it would have favoured of an over vanity, had I acquainted my brother and sister with my conjecture, I could not persuade myself, but that as I had no mean opinion of my own person and

and beauty; so neither would the captain whose report of me to Mr. Richwould, who, in so many years, might have conceived a wrong idea of me, might still heighten his inclination for my society, and prove a more acute spur to his return, than any other motive whatsoever.

For all the above reasons, and for infinite others that I could have mustered, in failure of these, I took a place in the Gloucester stage for London; but never having been in that city for more than a few days, just after my first marriage, when my head was far otherwise occupied than in remarking upon the places and things that there offered to me; I was as absolute a stranger to the streets, ways, and methods in practice there, as if I had passed my whole life in the Indies: so that knowing one of my sister's maids to have been born and bred at London, I desired the favour of my sister, that she might attend me thither.

My sister complied very readily; when my brother, who sat by, saying, that from his best remembrance of London, a maid would scarce be a proper person to send of messages, or for several other matters that I might have occasion for; recommended to me also the taking a man.

man servant with me, when I should be suited, at all adventures.

I purposed to have answered my husband's letter when I should be come to London ; but my sister wishing for a sight of it before it was sent, I sat down, and answered it before my journey ; a true copy whereof I shall in the next place present my readers with.

Mrs. MARY RICHWOULD, to Mr.
GEORGE RICHWOULD.

Dear Mr. Richwould,

THE morning sun, after the horror of an impenetrable darkness, to a bewildered traveller, could not flush him with that inexplicable gladness of heart, that your's, by captain Boyce, transported my very soul with, after so long a search as I had vainly made after you ; and after I had relinquished even the hopes of ever hearing from or beholding my dearest husband more ; but there can be nothing impossible to the superior powers, however improbable it may appear to our limited apprehensions ; or who, at our parting from each other, for want of a provision for our maintenance, could have suspected you, within the compass of ten years, to have been master of the substance

stance you mentioned to me; or me to have been capable of extending yours to the full of your ultimate wishes?

It is with the sublimest delight that I perused the resolutions you had taken, soon after your landing at Antigua; as there is nothing of benefit to our affairs, but may be expected to proceed from like determinations, voluntarily enjoined, and heartily maintained by us; and you see you have prospered accordingly: for without these, what man, who set out as you did, ever succeeded in his purpose, to draw in a rich widow, to the bequeathing him all that she was worth?

It is not therefore our own policy or forecast, that can assure us the vanquishing of difficulty, or conquest, in every our undertakings: but it is the secret arm, acting as it were behind the curtain, that is ever at work, for the most beneficial ends, to its true votaries: so that to this, I must ascribe those events, that have placed you in so flourishing a condition.

Nor will I impute your advantages all wholly to your own act; but as I may be said to participate of your flesh and bone; so also, I hope, of your spirit too: for I may say, that no woman has ever been a truer

truer penitent for all the follies of my by-past life, or striven more, to compensate for them by my practice of, and adherence to, contrary principles, than myself; nor have my endeavours been less proportionably successful, being now able, as I above hinted, to make up the deficiency of your worth to the full sum of forty thousand pounds, the specifick sum you say you have prescribed to yourself.

If then, my beloved husband, instead of drawing me over the ocean, of which I am in no light measure fearful, will, at the petition of his poor wife, dispose of his plantation and effects, and hasten his return to England; as you shall there find yourself as opulent at your arrival to me, as without my contribution, the drudging on there for some years longer, would make you; where can be the difference as to the sum; and we shall have the more years of life to run together, in the mutual enjoyment of it.

I could really wish to be as happy, at any hazard, as I hope this paper, in your possession, will soon be; but so that we meet, which is all that I crave, if it may be with your pleasure, I shall wish it to be in England: though, however averse from
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my natural disposition for the watery element, let but my dear command it, his loving wife will inscrupulously meet his appointment, even at the verge of the whole earth's confines.

I have informed myself, that you have a council amongst you, for the affairs of your island; of which number you write me you shall soon be nominated; but could you but know how I dread your arrival to that honour, surely, my love would decline it, lest it should prove a means, not only of detaining you on the island, but more pleasurable too; for it will be hard for a man to shift places, even from worse to better, where the latter tends, in any shape, to his debasement.

I must intreat you, to write me by the very first shipping, when I may hope to joy over my dearest love, in the possession of his

Ever-dutiful wife,
MARY RICHWOULD.

C H A P. X.

Sends to captain Boyce. Captain visits Mrs. Richwould. Captain's compliments. Fears arise. Resolves to visit curiosities of London. Captain forces himself upon her to the play. Her description of the play-house. Captain's behaviour there. Takes her to the R—se. Escapes. A further stratagem.

THE above having obtained my brother and sister's approbation, I set out upon my journey the next day, and, upon my arrival in town, hired a little apartment for myself and my small family.

No sooner had I settled myself here, than demanding of my landlord how I must find out a West-India captain, whom I wanted to speak with, I was by him directed to inquire at two or three coffee-houses that were named to me. These I took down in writing; when having now some steps before me to proceed by, I the next morning sent out my man, with instructions for finding out captain Boyce, commander of the Sugar Cane, (his vessel being

being so called) of Antigua; nor had he more than two hours work, for obtaining a sight of him.

At his return he told me, that he had seen the captain, to whom he delivered this message; that I had received the letter he had brought me from Mr. Rich-would, the contents of which had fetched me to town, where I desired he would please to appoint a time and place for my waiting upon him.

The captain, madam, said he, who is one or other the prettiest gentleman I ever saw in my life, asked me if I was your servant, seeing me in livery. I told him I was; present my duty to your lady, said he, and let her know that my lodging being too remote for her to take the trouble of coming to, I will wait upon her at her's about four o'clock to-morrow afternoon; and in the mean time pay her, for me, my most humble respects.

He then said, that the captain made a note of my lodgings, and after giving him a couple of glasses of such noble rum, as he never in his life before had tasted, he left him.

It is not to be presumed, but my maid and I had business enough upon our hands,

hands, in not only my dressing but her own (for I chose to have her also without exception: since nothing more credits a mistress than a genteel and well habited servant) and then, in putting every thing about my lodging in print, for the reception of my husband's friend, the captain.

I had likewise collected many questions to ask of him, many speeches to make to him, and had practised before my glass many of the most becoming airs that I could suspect might ingratiate me to his good opinion: for my heart was so craving, after his pleasingly representing me to my husband, as to have confirmed my belief, that this would prove one of the most forcible incentives, to his according to my epistolary respects, and his speedier return to me.

Much about the hour preappointed came the captain; he was a very young gentleman, scarce five and twenty; but by his behaviour, so contrary to many whom I have since conversed with of his profession, that it was apparent to me he had enjoyed a genteel and liberal education.

We complimented each other first, in the manner of strangers; till, by degrees, becoming

becoming more and more familiar, we were very facetious together ; nor by the easy and free manner of our conversation, could I suspect, but our correspondence was to the full as satisfactory to him, as to myself. Amongst other discourse of my husband, I, protesting I would give the world for a sight of him ; Madam, replied he, Mr. Richwould, I can promise you, would be no ways behind in his donation, would that, without more doing, procure him the happiness of your company : for believe me, I have been a witness to the many sighs he has discharged, when considering the distance between you ; and again, when he feared you might be dead, he would be perfectly mopish for a time.

O captain, said he, when I left him, added the captain Boyce ; find her if possible. Send the letter as directed, to give her notice first, that I am living, and then where to apply to you for further knowledge of me ; and if, by the time that your hurry of business is a little over, you hear nothing of her ; as you love and respect me, make the journey yourself to her sister's, to inquire after her ; nor leave the most difficult course unattempted, for procuring a sight of her ;

her, for I shall esteem no charge too-great, for your reimbursement, and gratification.

Nor will the sight of her, I dare say, prove disagreeable to yourself, said he, added the captain ; unless she is much altered since I left her behind me : for if not, she will exhibit to you a fine woman.

An husband, frequently, sees more in the lady he loves, sir, said I, than most others can : as also does he that dislikes : this, a deficiency in what she really enjoys, and that, an abundance of what she merits not ; but nothing is more subject to change, than female faces, from infinite unsought accidents ; ten years time makes a far greater alteration in us, than in the men ; as no doubt, but he will find in me, upon the experiment.

Madam, replied the captain, there are alterations for the better, as well as for the worse, and I am conscious yours must have been of the former kind. In that, my good friend speaking of you from a by past recollection ; though he seemed to admire you as a woman, yet, had he but left you as you now appear to me, I am persuaded he must have deified you to me.

No one speech that can accost a woman's
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ears (save obscenity) will sooner draw the colour into her cheeks, than extolling her own beauty, by the other sex ; there going a consciousness along with the sound, of the desirableness of the party commended. The very idea whereof spreads a dye over the part approved, by way of check, to all impure impressions from it.

Whether it was from the above specified, or from whatever other motive, I know not ; but though my own eyes could not behold it, I was as sensible as my glass could have rendered me, that I had put on a scarlet hue ; my cheeks burning like coals of fire ; nor could I permit the captain to pass without reply, lest he should have taken my taciturnity, for an assent to his compliment : so that recovering myself ; with a smile, Sir, said I, by the extravagance of your flights, had I met you under any other character, than as a messenger from my husband, I should have suspected a lover in you ; but you gentlemen, who have an unrestrained fluency of words at your command, commonly brace them up even to exaggeration, when you believe you may delight us silly women by them.

I must therefore intreat you, to represent

sent me to my husband at your return, both in person and affection to be the very woman he left me ; save that I abound with so insatiable an inclination for his return, as nothing but his presence can abate.

In short, he stayed tea with me, and hoped he should have the pleasure of my company home with him ; for that he should not tarry more than three weeks, before he should set sail again, and mightily pressed it upon me, how anxious Mr. Richwould was for my coming over ; but to all this, and much more to the like tendance, I made no positive reply ; but kept him in suspence therein ; for that by several parts of his behaviour, and some speeches, obscured by the double entendre, I grew doubtful, whether my sailor held the greater affection for his friend, or his friend's lady.

However, I chose not to shew my suspicion, lest (had I affronted him, as must have proved the case upon his explanations to me) from some malicious turn in my disfavour, he might divert my husband's inclination from me : so that not seeming to see, I could not be expected to censure ; and after a visit of full three hours he left

H 2 me ;

me ; but not so well pleased with his company by far, as I had promised myself I should be.

Not expressing the least inclination for a repetition of the captain's visit, I was in hopes I should have seen no more of him, unless he might call near the time of his departure, to give me notice to be ready for him, in expectation of my taking my passage with him.

Having compleated the necessary call that I had to town, I purposed to pass away a month there, not only that I might be able to join in any conversation, upon the remarkable things, and places there ; but become somewhat acquainted with the manners and customs of it : so that seeking a familiarity with my landlорd's daughter, a very well bred and agreeable companion for me, I purposed with her to stroll daily, from place to place, till we had seen all that would be worthy my notice.

I invited her to tea with me the next day, and there informing her of my desire, in case she would be so good as to accompany me ; she readily embraced the motion, and we appointed the next morning for our outset. Having then seen every thing about the tower, which was the first place we

we attempted, we returned before dinner time, intending for a play in the evening.

I was greatly delighted in the society of this young lady: for that she having visited the tower before, was not only able to point out to me things there, that I should have passed over in the multitude, regardlessly; but when we came home, to recapitulate the several parts of the scenes we had been present at, which impressed them the more lastingly upon my memory.

About an hour before we were to have taken coach for the play, came my captain, whom I could by no means have expected. He now accosted me with all the freedom of an old acquaintance, and down he sat; but though I chose not to be guilty of rudeness to him, for fear of the mischief to arise from him with my husband, I would not forbear telling him, that I was sorry he had given himself the trouble of calling that afternoon, for that I was under an engagement for the play, with a young lady of my acquaintance.

The very diversion, fair lady, said he, that I was in hopes you would permit me to wait upon you to. I came purposely with that view, nor can any thing be more

H 3 apropos :

apropos: But are you for the boxes or pit? madam, said he; because as some ladies choose one, some the other, the time of our going must be regulated by that: for if you design for the former, an hour or two hence will be soon enough; but for the latter, it matters not how soon we are moving.

I was so confounded at the impertinence of the man, and at his dialect of pits and boxes, that I knew not what answer to return him: for what either was, or which was better, or worse than other, was no ways in my way of thinking; but I wished from my heart, that I had nominated some other place that I was going to, rather than the play, that I might, if possible, have shifted him off.

He then renewing his request, I at a venture replied, the pit; when he desired my servant might call a coach: for that the sooner we were there, the better place we should have.

By this time miss came in to me; when the captain accosting her, they two fell into a regular dissertation upon plays, company, actors, and such a parcel of names they had for person's and things, as I could by no means chime in with; but

glad I was that miss was come, and that the whole conference was held between them, as it released me from abundance of impertinence, that I dreaded, upon sight of captain Boyce.

Our coach waiting us, we went to the play ; though miss insisted upon its being a full hour too early ; nor would the first musick begin before that time : but the gentleman carrying it, away we went ; for as to my part, knowing nothing of the matter, I stood wholly neuter.

I expected to have seen a very fine place, as I had heard it represented to me ; and imagined no less, upon opening the pit door to us, than to have been let in to an assembly of the gayest company about the town ; when, to my abundant astonishment, we entered into a vast dark area, with here and there a glimmering un-snuffed taper, thinly dispersed about the sides of it ; but indeed unless we had had more company, it would have been little worth while to have afforded us more light : for we were the only persons to be seen in the house, all around us, save a few sleeping servants in livery, who seemed by their situation, to have been placed in a sphere above us. Nor yet, could we say that we

were wholly alone : for that over our heads we heard a humming, and now and then loud voices of living animals.

I was so horribly vexed at the disappointment I had received, that I heartily wished myself at home again ; nor though the captain and miss had both talked of the play beginning by and by ; could I conceive it would recompense me for my tedious confinement, to the dismal station I was then in ; nor why we should all be such fools, to elect that frightful region, preferably to other people, could I for the heart of me imagine ; but time, the discloser of the secret workings of the human breast, in less than an hour fully apprized me, of the intent of our so early appearance.

As the robber, so the lover too, it's said, delights in the twilight ; and o' my conscience, our light was less than that ; nor would the captain have made an ill use of it, had but I been like minded with himself : for not many minutes from seating ourselves had slipt away, before snatching my hand in his (for he had squatted himself down between miss and me) he began to squeeze it, as in transport ; then clapping it to his bosom, and pressing it there,

there, he drew it half way to meet his lips, and saluted it.

My indignation was so lively at this piece of downright brothelry, that though I feared to irritate him to an enemy, yet his behaviour to me was intolerable ; but as I was full proof against his stratagems to my dishonour, and as a few hours must separate us, I passed by not only this, but far greater indignities, before we quitted the house : for upon several of the transactions in the play, he would make allusions so unbecoming a chaste ear, that my whole strength was exerted, to support me under them.

I held out, however, during the play, and glad I was that I should soon be released from him ; but he had still another game to play, when I thought the cards had been thrown up : for leading me out of the house, and miss following us, he took me into a tavern at hand, which I judged to be a part of the playhouse, and led me into a room there ; whilst I believing he was conducting me to the coach, as readily followed him, as if we had been before hand agreed upon it.

At our entering the room, miss who had followed us, and knew more of the

matter than I did, trembled, and looked so pale, as to create me abundance of concern for her. My dear miss, said I, are you well? Yes, she said, she was well; —but—but what? said I, child—Has any thing happened to ruffle you? she was very cautious of speaking out; till the captain stepping up to the bar, to order it somewhat for our drinking;

Dear madam, said she, is that gentleman of your particular acquaintance? no truly! said I, the first time that I ever saw him, was two days ago, when he brought me a message from my husband, who is abroad; and indeed! I little expected him again to-day. Why? madam, said she, I hope you will excuse me—; but—this is one of the rankest bawdyhouses in town—I would not be seen here by any one who knows me, for the world—my reputation will be gone for ever.

That never shall it be upon my account, assure yourself, miss, said I. You are sensible, I am but a stranger in town, and know nothing of these places; but am infinitely obliged to you for the hint, since you may depend upon it, now I am apprized of it, this shall be no long abiding place for either of us.

I have had some cause before now, to be cautious of this gentleman's behaviour, said I, and wherever I suspect a danger, I am upon my guard against it; but who could have imagined this? however, I am not at liberty altogether to resent his usage to me; for reasons I will inform you of at my lodgings; or else, I should tear the throat of such a villain out, as should attempt an attack upon my virtue.

By this time, the captain returning to us; ladies, said he, I have ordered in a glass of wine for our refreshment, after so tedious a tarry in the house, with a cold chicken and ham, in order the better to relish it, and the waiter is stept up to set a room to rights for us, where we'll sit for a while, and regale ourselves, and then think of our return home.

I was so struck, after the report miss had made me of the house, at hearing him talk of our going up stairs; that I had no power for replying, on the sudden, to him. This, miss perceiving, bless me sir, said she, my father will think me lost, should I stay longer than he may reasonably expect me to do, after the play is over. I would not upon any account go up, or eat here; but as you was pleased to say

you had ordered a glass of wine, I would not be so rude as not to taste it.

Boyce, as I could readily perceive, snapt at this speech of missis, as the omen most promissory of success to his designs, that could casually have happened ; and instantly calling the waiter, ordered him to call a coach for that lady ; then, madam, said he to me, I will but just put this lady into her coach, and wait upon you up stairs.

The very idea of up stairs, in such an house as that we were in had been represented to me, drew the blood into my face, and my resentment into my heart at the same time. No sir, said I, you must have a very mean opinion of me, to suppose I can take this lady abroad with me, and then not accompany her home again ; nor can I suspect my business at present to be so urgent, as to prevent it ; therefore missis, said I, we will go together.

Every part of the captain's scheme, seeming now in a fair way for frustration, he had ready a thousand arguments all at work, preventive of my leaving him ; but because I cared not to charge him with his apparent perfidy to my husband, and projected abuse of me, I refrained from them,

them, and only insisted, that should I be guilty of such an unpoliteness to my companion, I could never either look her or her father in the face again.

Having thus resolved upon going ; Boyce taking me aside, dear lady, said he, you may expect me to-morrow at four, before which time I will have considered of some amusement we may be present at alone, without children to break in upon our pastime, who are to be bound up by their parent's hours.

I am sorry, sir, that you pitched upon to-morrow, said I, for I shall be engaged upon a party for the whole day. Then the next day, fair lady, said he, I will be sure to attend you at the same hour ; to which I only courtesied.

By this time, the coach waiting, the drawer came in to light us to it ; when Boyce would insist upon seeing us home, but miss beseeching him not to do it, and pledging as a reason, that her father was the most jealous man breathing ; so that should she return with a gentleman in her company, she should scarce ever hear the like of it : nor durst she have come out with us two, had he been at home ; he insisted, and after placing us both in the coach,

coach, under much regret shewn for being obliged to part with me, we drove off.

Scarce ever had I been more thankful for any escape than for this, and so I told miss ; and in our way, not only explained some things that had passed at his first visit to me, but several that had been unnoticed to her as we sat in the dark at the play-house ; all which I excused the permission of, under the dread of his misrepresenting me to my husband ; nor blamed she my conduct in the least, she said : for that no one was more susceptible of resentment than a disappointed lover.

C H A P. XI.

Sends to her husband by another hand.

Stratagem to deceive the captain.

Leaves the town. A letter from Miss Maskall. Picture of a confounded lover. Miss sends him upon a forlorn hope. Merry upon this letter in Gloucestershire. Mrs. Rich- would's answer.

IT was too late, I thought, at our return from the tavern, to fix upon any settled rota of reflection for that night; but no sooner had I laid my head upon my pillow, than the confusion of my mind, all fuming up to my brain, introduced such a train of thought there, as upon recollection and recapitulation, in the morning, I determined to put forthwith into practice: so that rising earlier than usual, I sent for Miss Maskall (that being the young lady my companion's name) to breakfast with me.

Miss, said I, the adventures of the last night have wrought so powerfully upon me, as, notwithstanding the pleasure I had promised myself in your society, at the exhibition

exhibition of many more particulars, most worthy of note in this metropolis, to have determined me to quit it to morrow ; in that, I can see nothing before me here, whilst I remain subject to be haunted by that designing fellow captain Boyce, but uneasiness and mischief. Should I deny myself to him whilst I remain in town, he may, to my husband, charge it to misbehaviour in me, in company that I judged improper to be found in by him, and may blazon my character, in such a manner to my husband abroad, as that he may, suspecting me of lewdness in my deportment, both slight and contemn me. Should I admit him to a freedom of communication to me, I can have no assurance, but at some unguarded moment, he may overpower and debauch me ; which, in the detested place we fled from last night, had I not been forewarned by you, and had been alone with him, he might have perpetrated ; since every, both thing and person, in that nursery of iniquity, would but, in their several proper spheres, have contributed to the accomplishment of it.

I have, added I, a letter by me, ready wrote to my husband, which at the captain's departure from me, at his first visit,

I had certainly delivered to him, to have carried to my dear at his return; had I not been prevented by my thorough disapproval of his behaviour; but what has since happened, hath confirmed me in the opinion, of committing neither myself or mine to his detested custody.

What I would beg then of you miss, added I, is to prevail with your father, who goes to the exchange every day, to inform himself what vessels (save that captain Boyce commands) may be nearest ready to sail to Antigua; and to desire him to deliver my letter to such captain as he shall approve for the certain conveyance of it to my husband: for this once executed, I shall then have no other detainer of myself in London, from whence as from a pestilence, will I then fly that wicked scoundrel, captain Boyce; nor is it a light disappointment to my vengeance, that I durst not acquaint him with the cause of my departure, and at the same time, shame him for his villainous behaviour, both to his friend, and employer, my husband, and against my own honour; but as I am restrained from this, for the reasons I have before hinted to you, and am not at liberty abruptly to leave the town

town and him, without leave taken, and recommendations to my husband, unless for some most prevailing occasion ; what I must intreat of you miss, added I, is, upon his next inquiry for me at your house, to inform the captain, that receiving a letter from the country, at which I was greatly alarmed, I took coach, and left the town directly.

Miss assured me she would act according to my request, though she chose not, voluntarily to engage in an officious falsity ; but that the person to be imposed upon by this, being one, to whom no faith was due ; and the intent of it, only for the prevention of far greater evil, she would comply with me.

In short, her father taking my letter to the exchange with him, delivered it to a captain of known character and reputation ; which he had no sooner informed me of at dinner time, than I sent my servant to bespeak places by the Gloucester stage for next morning, and at the appointed hour left London ; after giving miss a direction to me at my sister's, and obtaining her promise, of an account how the captain would brook his disappointment.

My

My brother and sister were surprized at my so sudden return, till I had let them into the history of my travels, and all the consequences attendant thereon ; nor would my sister believe, but that my husband must have been a confederate with the captain, by the latter so soon shewing himself, as at the first visit : for whatever his inclination had suggested to him, she said, he would rather have studied means for rendering himself amiable in my eye, first, than have pushed his projected mischiefs, upon a single view of me, unless I had offered him some occasion ; she then asked me how I could bear his behaviour? and what refection I shewed to it ?

I then told her my fears of being placed in a bad light before my husband, who would hear the captain's story long enough before I could be let in to my justification ; and that this had deterred me from shewing the indignation I received his affronts with. This, she allowing in some measure to be well judged, wondered the less at his proceeding with them ; however, she said I had acted very discreetly, in not only offering my letter to another conveyance, but in quitting the town by surprize upon him ; adding, that if the man was

so intent upon the pursuit of me, it might not be impossible but he might follow me down to her house ; having, as she judged, a justifiable pretence for it, under colour of my further commands, before his leaving England.

I must confess, that I had not thought of guarding against this ; but had then several means upon the stocks, in preparation, for avoiding the sight of him, in case he should follow me ; though not one, that might not subject me to his evil report to my husband : so that I grew even as disturbed after my return, as I before was, with my stay in town ; till upon the second day that I had been in the country, I received the following letter from Miss Maskall :

Miss J E N N Y M A S K A L L , to Mrs.
M A R Y R I C H W O U L D .

Dear Madam,

ACcording to your desire, when with me in town, of signifying to you what should pass upon captain Boyce's next visit to our house, in expectation of meeting with you there ; I have the pleasure to assure you, that I never took more delight in any one transaction of my life, than

than in the mortification then in my power, to induce upon that base and perfidious man, on the afternoon of your leaving London.

It was about four o'clock, as I was sitting at work in the dining-room, that our shopman ringing the stairs bell, let Judith know that a gentleman waited me below. My father being absent, I ordered him to be shewn up, having a suspicion of whom it might be; but to my no small vexation, he had heard from the shopman of your being out of town, before he came up to me, so that I lost that part of the delight I had promised myself, of conveying the first report of it to him; but matter sufficient soon offered, for making that loss up to me abundantly; for,

Upon his first stepping into the room to me, very hastily, and almost breathless; What a pox is the meaning of all this? said he, miss—Why, I hear Mrs. Richwould is gone into the country. She is so, sir, said I.—She set out this morning early.—And never apprise me of it? replied he.—Why? she appointed me to be with her here this afternoon.—This is all some damned juggle!—I'll be f worn

sworn it is—appoint me a meeting—and then out of town before I come.—She knows I come from her husband—I have fifty things to say to her. I am sorry for that, sir, said I; but they cannot be said now. I must see her—I will see her—and therefore miss, said he, I desire you will keep me no longer in suspense; but let me know where she is—Perhaps, she may have taken a trip for the day—but then I think she might have acquainted me of it—I would have made one with her—Pray when do you expect her back again?

Truly, said I, you as well know when to expect her, as I do; nor whether ever I may have the pleasure to see her again, can I say: for she took a final farewell of me, and I of her, as not soon promising that satisfaction to ourselves again.

The devil you did! said the captain—but (coming nearer to me) my dear miss, added he, let me intreat you not to confound me thus—Do, my love, be so generous as to release me from the perplexity I am under; and sweet little soul, tell me ingeniously, How far is she gone to? and when do you expect her? or is she really out of town at all? or do you

you only covet to torment me, because you find me anxious for the truth?—tell me, my dearest miss—tell me truly!

“Not I, upon my honour, sir, replied I. What interest can I have in uttering a falsity to you? or how can I suspect you of being tormented, for the absence of another gentleman’s lady? I suppose you claim no authority over her; and if so, was she not at liberty to go and come, when and where she pleased, without being accountable to you for her actions? If not, sir, you must call her to account for them, I think. I have nothing to do with that.

Well! well! said he, I perceive there is a juggle between you; but I know where to find her well enough, she is but at her sister’s in Gloucestershire.

Perhaps, you may be mistaken in that too, replied I; but it’s nothing to me, since you choose not to credit what I say, pray take your own course.

My dearest, pretty angel, said he, catching me in his arms; tell me but where to find her, and I shall adore you for ever—Do;—Dear creature satisfy me that, and command me anything, I will perform it for you.

Twist-

Twisting myself then from his embrace ; hands off ! said I, and know your distance, or I shall call out, and disgrace you. I meant no harm, child, said he.— Tell me where Mrs. Richwould is, you shall not be offended at my company a moment longer. It is not for me, said I, to publish every thing that I am acquainted with to all the world for asking ; nor can I presume, but had the lady supposed it necessary, that you should have known where she is gone to, she would have left some message with me for that purpose. Then you will not tell me where she is gone to, said he. Not without her leave; I can assure you, sir, said I.

Let me tell you, madam, said he, notwithstanding the regard you pay to that lady, or, at least, would be thought to pay her ; you are hereby taking the most opposite step to her interest, that can be imagined ; nor, was she to know the behaviour you have used me with, would she thank you for it, I can promise you. I have somewhat for her ear from her husband — I have a large sum of money at her command—I have many affairs to transact with her ; and because she has stept out of town, perhaps upon urgent business,

business, and neglected to leave word for me where to write to, or follow her, I am to be shuffled off from the knowledge of it, as if I was a pickpocket. I say, madam, added he, that lady will have no cause to extol this behaviour of yours ; but I will set out for Gloucestershire to her sister's, where I fear not like treatment with your's : so that you see, I know where to find her.

This sir, said I, seems to be your mistaking day : for I can assure you, that as to both purposes, your journey must be fruitless ; not, but that was I certain that the lady must be a sufferer by my silence, notwithstanding my not being authorised so to do, I should inform you of her destination.

I thought he would have gone out of his wits, when I had told him so, he was in such an extasy. He vowed and swore, that he had affairs of the utmost importance to communicate to you, and would not for ten thousand pounds, but you knew them before he left England ; nay insisted what a favour it would be to you, to inform him where to find you ; when that I might, if possible, divert him from a journey after you to your sisters.

VOL. II.

I

Sir,

Sir, said I, Mrs. Richwould, the day before she left London, received a letter which shocked her very much ; it contained an account of the approaching death of a near relation at Wellingborough in Northamptonshire, when no sooner had she read it, than she took the resolution for paying her the last duty she should ever be able ; and sat out the next morning, by some stage-coach that was to go within few miles of the place ; from whence she was to get another conveyance over thither.

Miss, said he, I am under that obligation to you, which I mistrust my capacity for ever discharging ; but as far as at present my power will extend to, pulling out one of the charmingest diamond rings from his pocket, let me beg your acceptance of this, said he, as the least token I can now express my gratitude by.

I profess, the little beautiful jewel set my mouth upon watering directly ; but I had, however, sufficient mastery over my inclination, to withstand it, though pressed upon me very many times : for I could not find in my conscience, to grasp at a reward for my treachery to him, which might have over compensated for a number

ber of downright truths: so that after complimenting me with an inundation of thanks, and assuring me that he would set off for Wellingborough the next morning, we parted; whilst I chuckled over the deceit I had put upon him; but how I shall come off at his return, I know not; for as his impatience will put him upon inquiring at every house in the place for you; I shall be charged as a cheat by him, and what will be the consequence I am uncertain; but be that what it will, I shall pride myself only, in that I am admitted so be,

Dear madam,

Your most humble servant,

JANE MASKALL.

My sister and I made ourselves very merry at miss Jenny's letter, approving highly of what she had done; nay, as the falsity she had declared to him, was only as far as might be preventive of his own greater evil, in the adulterous design he had upon me, my sister herself admitted the necessity of it; but added, that she thought some of the circumstances might have been omitted: for that, though miss might imagine all that related but

to the same fact, to be but one lie ; yet, in her opinion, every several circumstance was a separate breach of veracity.

We wondered what the captain would say to miss upon his return; when he should find himself thus imposed upon ; till having reconsidered the story, I told my sister that it might not be impossible, but if the captain's zeal would hold out so long, he might have two or three journeys before he might discover the fraud ; provided miss played her cards, but like a subtle gamester : for that according to the report miss had sent us, she dismissed him with but half his errand.

We were highly suspicious also, that having missed his prize at Wellingborough, if he was not obliged to sail sooner, we should stand a fair chance for a visit from him in Gloucestershire ; when my sister said, she should scarce refrain from affronting him ; but I begged her not to think of it : for that undoubtedly, for the short time at most that he could stay in England, we might find some way for concealing me from him ; which I should much rather choose ; that his missing

missing me might, to himself, seem accidental, than that I had on purpose avoided him, for the reason that I had all along steered by.

We had scarce any thing else but the captain in our heads, till I had prepared an answer to miss, which I sent her by the return of the post.

Mrs. MARY RICHWOULD, to Miss
JENNY MASKALL.

Dear Miss,

YOUR kind and agreeable letter has proved thoroughly amusing to me and my sister, who both think you have managed the captain like as fair an enemy as a fighting man could wish to have met with ; and heartily rejoiced we are at your disentangling yourself so expeditiously from his gripe; lest another squeeze should have undone you : for however you may judge of the captain, and his actions, relative to his prosecution of me ; I doubt not, but had he found you yielding, he had stuck to the scent he was upon, and had quitted the chace he began with, as not comparable to your merit and beauty : nay, had even a more disrelishing morsel than myself appeared

within the tether of his brutish appetite, I am doubtful whether he would have quitted a certainty in petticoats for the fairest face in christendom upon an hazard only.

I have the charity to make allowance for human frailties and passions ; nor can I so much condemn the hungry beggar, for feasting himself upon a morsel that was cooked up for a more delicate palate ; though had not that fallen in his way, he would have contented himself upon offals : for I esteem the case of my captain to be not unlike it ; who is but just, as I may say, launched into the conversation of our sex, after abstinence, on board, for some months : so that Joan or my lady presenting first, let the meal but be once made, I question whether he cares for more.

I must request you, by every means in your power, to prevent his coming to my sister's ; lest I should be compelled to treat him as I would wish to avoid ; but if nothing less will do, I hope you will be time enough apprized of it, to inform me, before he can reach us, that I may have an opportunity for disappointing him.

I shall trust all, my dear, to your management, who have so happily begun ;

nor shall I long for any thing more than the arrival of the time, that may supply me with an opportunity of personally presenting to my dear Miss Maskall, the sincerest thanks of her

Most obliged friend and servant,
MARY RICHWOULD.

C H A P. XII.

Miss Maskall to Mrs. Richwould.

Mad scenes of the captain. Second letter. More symptoms of the captain's distraction. Reflections on the human race. Answer to Miss Maskall's two letters. Reflections on the lustful man.

I Remained in a dread of seeing the captain, from some unforeseen event or other, till a future post brought me the subjoined account from my good correspondent, Miss Maskall.

*Miss J E N N Y M A S K A L L , to Mrs.
M A R Y R I C H W O U L D .*

Dear Madam,

NEVER was poor weather-beaten vessel so tossed and tumbled by the agitation of the waves, during a tempest,

pest; as poor captain Boyce has been, ever since I wrote you last: for having brushed off with half a message from me, he came next morning in post haste, to let me know he had forgotten the day before, to ask me the name of the dying relation you was gone to; without which, he said, he should make nothing of his journey; nor spared he for numberless dunces and blockheads to stigmatize himself with, for departing so lamely instructed. He had given earnest, he said, for the Northampton stage, and lay at the inn in readiness; when just as he was to have stept into the coach, this demand upon me coming into his head, he was forced to be left behind, till he could inform himself farther of it.

He exclaimed violently against the loss of a day to him, who must so soon leave England; and had you but been fully apprized of the tidings he had to convey to you, he said, you had never been so fond of running after the dying, whilst the living might have proved so beneficial to you; but he had lost one day, it was true, according to his first intention; though he was resolved to recover it, by setting out on the morrow on horseback; then

then again desired me to give him in writing, the name of the relation at whose house you was to be,

Truly, sir, said I, it was great pity, since the affairs you have in hand with Mrs Richwould are so earnest, that you should have thrown away a day after this manner : for since I can now make you not a whit wiser than you was before, I may fairly call it thrown away.

I never heard of her relation's name, nor I sir, added I; nor indeed would it have been to any purpose to me, who am a perfect stranger to the family : so that you must make your own way in the best manner you can, without the least further intelligence from me.

All the arguments that I could employ to that end, would not gain his belief, but I must know the person's name ; till at length, wanting to be rid of him, I vowed that I never had heard it ; and by this means I obtained my purpose : for turning upon his heel, he swore he had never been so bubbled in his life, and left me.

I have sent you this short sketch of the complexion of the man, who seems to be so bewildered in his tenies, that

what may be the event of his not meeting you, I am not able to determine; but he sets out to-morrow on horseback, he says, and purposes to lie there at night.

Was the captain embarked on a good cause, how commendable were his industry, which now, being perverted to an iniquitous view, renders him both ridiculous, and odious to me!

I must expect him again in a few days; but how I shall stand the shock of his ire, should he mistrust me to have made a fool of him, I dread to reflect on; as you have desired me to send you all fresh occurrences, I beg leave to subscribe myself hereto,

Your humble servant to command;

JANE MASKALL.

Having for one post delayed to answer the above, whilst my sister and I had many a good laugh over it, to think what an ass the man had made of himself; came another letter from miss, verbatim, in these words.

Miss

Miss J E N N Y M A S K A L L, to Mrs.
M A R Y R I C H W O U L D.

Dear Madam,

IT is abundance of pity that you stayed no longer in town, when another day or two might have shewn you poor Boyce's lodgings; for I purposed to have taken you to Bedlam, a seminary we have here, for the maintinance of such as imagine themselves any thing, save what they really are, which is mostly occasioned through an over-quicknes in their cogitative faculties, imbibing false ideas, or at least applying them to foreign purposes.

I verily thought I should have split my sides with laughing this morning, about eleven o'clock (when I had no other conceit, but of the wild captain's being far on his journey) to see him come puffing up stairs in his boots, all bespattered so with dirt, that the ground work of them was totally eclipsed by it; nor had his horse been less sparing of it upon his cloaths, which were as chequered with it, as those of a postilion.

I wondered, upon hearing feet upon the stairs, who it could be that made such

a stamping there ; being well persuaded, it could be none of our family ; but he soon set me to rights, by entering the dining room ; where, having begg'd my pardon for immediately seating himself, he declared, that riding being so unfrequented an exercise to him, he was never so fatigued in his days as at that instant.

I am, madam, said he, one of the most unfortunate of the sons of Adam ; not a day has passed ever since you first informed me of Mrs. Richwould's journey to Wellingborough, by a coach, that would set her down near that place ; that I have not, at least, intended fifty times, when I was next so happy as to see you, to inquire what coach it was she went by : for having once learnt that, from an application to its driver, I judged I might come to the knowledge of where he parted with her, and from thence, of who conveyed her to Wellingborough, and from him, how he disposed of her there, which would point out to me her residence as truly, as had you known, you could have told me ; but when I saw you last, I entirely forgot it.

No longer ago than yesterday afternoon,

noon, within an hour after I had left you, I called it to mind again, and was coming to you full speed for your answer; but a friend taking me into a tavern for a while, it slipt my memory again, till I called in to breakfast at St. Alban's this morning; when, lest I should lose it again, I took horse, left my breakfast behind me, and am returned for information as to the above particulars: for, as I can no ways get on horseback to-day again, I purpose to make what inquiries I can this afternoon, and set out upon my journey to-morrow.

Now madam, said he, please first to answer me, what coach the lady went by, that I may minute it in my pocket-book; and then I will proceed to my next question.

I believe, sir, said I, it will be saving you the trouble of a second question, when I protest to you, that I never have once heard the name of the stage-coach, the lady you want, went to Wellingborough in. Not know what coach she travelled in? Madam, said he, that must be impossible. Could she tell you she was to go near Wellingborough, and not tell you by what, and whose stage coach?

recollect

recollect yourself, miss, she must have told you.

Wherein lies the impossibility? said I, you told me just now, that you had rode to St. Alban's and back to day, without offering at the least hint of whose horse you had; and why then not she do the same, as to the coach too?

It is amazing what disappointments I have sustained in this affair! said he; and all from her not being explicit at first. Well! I must set out then again to-morrow, added he; but I am really in despair of finding her, from your information.

I am surprised, said I, captain, that you should put yourself to all this inconvenience and vexation, for a matter, as you say, merely relative to her own interest. For my part, was I in your place, and she had given me the slip, e'en let her take it for her pains, I should give myself no concern about her.

I value my honour above rubies, miss, said he; nor will I, at the hazard of my life, decline my pursuit till I discover her. My tidings will make her happy. Should I then decline so glorious a task, for so fine a lady as Mrs. Richwould, I should

should never cease to repent it to my dying day.

He had told me, that a porter held his horse at our door: so that upon his taking leave of me, rising very stiffly, I had a mind to see him mount, and so went to the window; but an old fellow of sixty would have vaulted into the saddle more nimbly, than my young captain; who, every step the horse took, proclaimed his disorder by his movements: for which reason, though he should find no fresh query for my solution, that may retard him, I may venture to say, that not a limb to his body will consent to his journey to-morrow.

I have let my father into the whole scheme, who hugs himself at our contrivance, and furthers it all that he can. What I shall next write you I am ignorant, unless of the captain's commitment to the apartment I above mentioned; where, at least, he may solace himself under less bodily torment than he left me in; if he can but be wise enough to submit to the condition that will keep him out of further harm's way:

I hope to hear from you, dear madam,
and

and whatever fresh adventures shall happen, you shall be sure to partake of, with

Madam,

Your most obedient servant,

JANE MASKALL.

After my sister and I had read the above, which I could not forbear laughing at, said my sister, I am in some doubt, whether I ought to laugh or lament for the master of miss's letter; nor can I forbear to think, that this rather claims place in my intellects, than that; though if I was merrily disposed, without further consideration, there is a field large enough for indulging over that, before me, in all reason, from the figure, circumstances, and behaviour of, that licentious man, who in prosecution of his lustful appetite, casts himself voluntarily under such perplexities, as a soberer man would study to avoid.

But yet, when one comes to reflect, that this creature, thus viciously acting, is of one's own species; is indued with a reasonable soul and faculties; formed under

under the same hand ; of the same parts and properties with one's self ; a sense of our capacities for the perversion of those endowments to brutality, is a sufficient cause for melancholy, that our natures should be subject to such depravation, the reflection diminishes us in our own sentiments ; gives us the most shocking idea of our race, and demonstrates to us how vicious our appetites all naturally are, when ungoverned by the power of our reason.

I have frequently wondered, whilst reason is, confessedly, admitted for the noblest faculty of the soul ; and whilst every one is more or less endowed with this, and consents to the rectitude of its guidance ; how it should ever come to pass, that its power should be so subdued in many of us, at certain times and seasons, and upon certain occasions ; though in other cases, we pride ourselves upon the rationality of our actions and sentiments ; nor can I otherwise account for it, than as an obstinacy in our will, suggesting to us the fruition, of somewhat of such high price in our misguided estimation, that we resolutely withstand every excellency of our nature, for the attainment of, and wilfully

wilfully close up all our other senses for the gratification of one, and that, by far, the basest annexed to our beings.

What can be the cause, that, in most suicides that happen amongst us, our juries, let all other circumstances, till the very action committed, appear ever so well and deliberately conducted, should find the party a lunatick ; but from the general consideration, that no part of human nature, with his perfect senses and reason at command, can consent to be guilty of its own destruction ; nor can they be blamed for such verdicts. Wherein then differs the libidinous man, who through his thirst after the object of his passion, though by a more tedious course, pursues the same end of destruction ? and, if in the first case, it can be sufficient cause for restraint and confinement, that the party has made attempts upon his life, in order to prevent a future mischief to himself ; why ? in the latter the same means should not be put in practice, I cannot account for ; this being as desperate, as injudicious, and savage an act, and equally destructive in its consequences, as the former : for which reason I cannot but think, that miss destined him to his pro-

proper lodgment; and indeed, added she, were all these unthinking wretches to be doomed to such durance, it might be a means of quenching those lustful flames, or at least, of suppressing them under their own ashes, that now make such ravages in the world, to the desolation of innocence and virtue.

I told my sister, that I applauded her scheme extremely; though I suspected an insuperable difficulty in it. Wherein, said she, if proper laws were but universally made for the purpose? to which I replied, that if all the men this way inclined, were to be cooped up as she had projected; I feared, that a college of less dimensions than the moon would not be able to contain them.

I now went upon answering Miss Maskall's two epistles, which I did in the following manner:

Mrs. MARY RICHWOLD, to Miss JENNY MASKALL.

Dear Miss,

THE trouble you have suffered on my account, were it not now and then allayed in some measure by the diversion the captain gives you, I should never

never be able to compensate for ; but really your two last have given me a vast delight, when I reflected upon the man himself ; and methought held my eye upon him, in the very humorous attitude you therein placed him.

Is it to be accounted for, that man, the perfectest creature in the creation, should be so wholly delighted with the imperfections of another, as to place the sole rest of his soul upon her ? Must not the very she, that he so covets, debase her principles to the very dregs of her species, and become not only one of the most impious, but contemptible of her sex, before she can be prepared for his purpose ? Must she not, to admit his satisfactions, disrobe herself of all the most becoming ornaments of her sex ; her virtue, fidelity, chastity, and piety ? whilst like the fly, deserting the fonder and more wholesome meats, he falls greedily to his prey upon the most putrid, corrupt, and abandoned carcase.

Surely, miss ! Did men consider this, how incomparably would one loving, faithful, and trusty wife, with all her little feminine foibles about her, be preferred by them, to all the vicious embraces

braces of the whole female generation besides? their interests are one, each mutually contending for the other's benefit, and jointly for that of their dear offspring; nor this, by a flash, a start; but for so long a time as providence shall continue them in being.

My sister has proved to me, that Bedlam, as you call it, is the most proper Seminary for such seedlings as the captain to be transplanted to: for being of contagious qualities, they ought to be inclosed from the community, to prevent infection by contact.

But to finish my remarks upon his properties; let me now come to the man himself, by this time returning from Wellingborough; sick of his journey, and possibly big with revenge, for the wild-goose chace you have sent him upon.

I should hope by this time, that the limited space for his stay in England, should be near run out; and would desire you, if possible, to learn from him, when it will end; for then I may fix some period to my fears; but above all things, let me intreat you to transmit to me your first knowledge, or well-grounded suspicion

cion of his intending me a visit, that I may be prepared to his confusion.

I hope, dear miss, to see London again next winter, with my brother and sister, who talk as if they should have some business there, and whom I have already recommended to your papa's for our stay there; nor can I omit to assure dear Miss Maskall, that one of the perfectest enjoyments I can promise myself there, will be her most agreeable society, to

Her real friend,

And servant,

MARY RICHWOULD.

C H A P. XIII.

*Takes a journey to avoid the captain.
Pursued by a stranger. Servant knocked down. Proves to be the captain. High words between them.
Attempts a rape. A rescue. Ravisher committed.*

HAVING heard nothing from Miss Maskall for above a week, I grew so disturbed in my mind about it, lest any thing should have fallen out pre-
ventive

ventive of her writing me, whatever she might know of the captain; or lest, having wrote, the letter should have miscarried (for that he must for some time have been returned from Wellinborough, I made but little dispute, upon his not finding me there) that I could no longer tolerate the state of uncertainty I was under; but hoping for some release from my anxieties, by change of place, I proposed to my sister, my going to an intimate friend of ours near Shipston in Warwickshire, where I would stay for a fortnight at least; in which time, if I should hear no further from miss, I might conclude that the captain, having given me over, was failed.

My sister, approving my resolution, lent me a horse and servant to carry me over, and who was to bring back the horses, and attend me again for my return, at such time as I should appoint him.

I set forwards for Warwickshire the next morning, and rode pretty smartly till towards noon, in hopes of reaching my friend's by dinner-time; but finding, upon inquiry, that I had still thirteen miles to go, and being both dry and very much

much fatigued, I put in at the next inn we came to ; not only for some refreshment, by rest for a while ; but intending to take my dinner there.

As I could not return the servant and horses that night, I was the less anxious for expediting my dinner, that I might give myself as much ease as I could : so that I lingered on the time there, till about five o'clock ; my sole aim being only to reach the end of my journey before it should be dark.

I was now mounted again, and had passed over about seven miles of this latter part of my journey ; when after we had entered into a very long narrow lane, at some distance before me, I saw a country-looking man, in a rug coat, who jogged on for a good space before us

As we came almost up to him, for fear he might have any design upon us in that lonely place, I put up on a canter ; and on passing him, just turned my head for a look in his face, but scarce caught a glimpse of it.

I had not rode many poles before I thought I heard in my rear, more horses feet than the one my servant rode : so that putting forward more briskly, and being

being very well mounted, I made no doubt, but if the stranger should follow me, I should easily outrate him.

The clutter still continuing, I turned me about to see what observations I could make upon my pursuers; when at the instant, I perceived the stranger's but end of his whip, to alight upon my servant's head, with such violence, that it fetched him down from his horse; but not seeing the stranger to alight, in order to rifle him, as I expected he would; but instead of that, to be still making after me; my heart so failed me, and my spirits were so retreated from it, as almost to leave me lifeless upon my horse: insomuch, that I made a doubt of my ability for maintaining my seat much further.

I whipped on, however, intent upon my own safety, by flight only; but the direction I still stept my head in, that I might apprise myself of the ground he gained of me, preventing my guidance of the horse, into the way that I would have chosen; upon discharging myself of the lane, and entering upon a large common, he had taken his own head so far, before I looked out for the beaten path that I was at first in, as to have left me incapable of

either seeing it, or turning him to it again.

I had rode near a mile upon this common, without other particular view than to outrun my pursuer, if possible; but though my eyes were turned mostly behind me, nothing was to be discovered of my servant: so that I was still the more terrified, from an apprehension of his being killed by the blow he had received.

The stranger still making after me, whipping and kicking as he rode, under the utmost impatience for overtaking me; I observed a farm-house at a distance in the fields (for I had now near crossed the common) to which I resolved to make up, as the most likely place, any where in view, to find succour at; when, at the same time, spying a little blind lane, which to my fancy led up to the house, without more ado I rode up it, intent upon gaining my deliverance there; but as, when dangers are the nearest to affecting us, we frequently meet with redress; so, whilst flattered under the security, that the lane would soon present me with, I found myself involved in such a difficulty, as must deliver me into the hands of my pursuer; for not above a furlong had I travelled

travelled in it, before I came, point blank, against a five-barr'd gate, which at once put a stop not only to my flight, but my freedom: for whilst I sat considering my misfortune, and looking out for a possibility of escape, the ruffian, who had driven me hitherto before him, coming up to me, I found him to be my old friend the captain.

My horror, at the sight of a man, than whom I had no sorer enemy to fear, in such a wild and pent up place, where no soul of the human species could either hear my cries, or be expected to my assistance, threw me into such an agony, that had I not instantly issued forth a deluge of tears for my misfortune, I had certainly fallen from my horse, and lost my senses, whilst I had lain wholly at the mercy of the brute; but these, giving vent to my sorrows, still kept up my spirits, for engaging in an argument with him, upon his perfidiousness to my husband, and his villainous designs upon me.

Madam, said he, How could you thus fly, first from London, and now from the sight of me, a man who loves you as I do, and that to your own knowledge too?

Love you, sir, said I, where love is law-

ful, and leave me to do the same. I perceived in a single hour's discourse with you, that the villain lurked in your heart, and waited but an opportunity to seize his prey : witness that house of debauchery you drew me ignorantly into ; when had it not been for the young lady that accompanied me, I might have dated my ruin from that night.

Never man sure fell into a more violent passion of cursing and rash oaths, than the captain, upon my naming Miss Maskall ; insomuch, that had I not screwed up my courage to a pitch, I could never have stood the shock of them ; till at length, cooling himself ; I am sure, my dear, said he, though under the tuition of that infernal minister at London, you could not there return me the affection most due to a passion like mine, that no human creature at large, can subsist in aversion from it ; and now we are alone, unguarded by such subtle spies as Miss Maskall, there can be no reason for denying me the gratification of my desires.

I would know, sir, said I, by what right you entitle me your dear ; a name, though the most delectable from the proper mouth, most detestable in my ears from

from yours ; nor would I have you ignorant, that I stand in need of no subtle spy, as you call Miss Maskall, to guard me from the prostitution of my honour and virtue to any man. Have I a dread attending me here, it is that I am alone with such a scoundrel, as I am now under a necessity of calling you, since your late declaration of the foulness of your inclination ; but let me tell you, sir, aided I, that it is not manly force, nor oaths, nor sweet words, nor all the compulsory measures that you can obtrude upon me, shall ever gain your ends on me : for against all these am I prepared to combat hand to hand, whilst I have a single muscle left to wag in opposition to the injury you now intend me ; till strength, life, and breath failing me, I will leave this piece of clay to your discretion, whilst my pure soul mounting aloft, shall reach those blissful mansions, which such a sin-clogg'd wretch as you are, can never expect to attain to.

Madam, replied the captain, with such a cloud over his whole brow and face, as (rising from a consciousness of shame, guilt, and confusion) effuscidated his whole countenance ; I pretend not to a know-

ledge of divinity. I am sensible, what you and I are made for, and that shall we perform, before I part with you.

It goes sorely against the grain with me, I must needs confess, added he, to offer violence to the object, for which my very soul is replete with love and admiration: but so it must be, nor shall it ever be said of me, that captain Boyce has wasted best part of a month, to find out the mistress of his delight and transport; that he has rode scores and scores of miles in quest of her; and at last, fortune having cast her into his arms; without the least intervening opposition, save her own ridiculous scruples to struggle with; that after all this, I say, he has tamely surrendered both her and his own hopes in her, to those very intreaties, that the most vicious of the sex are obliged, for their honour's sake, to seem to put a lover off with.

I hope, sir, said I, you took not this journey after me. Why? Can you question it, said he. Expressed I not my inclination sufficiently in London? and let me tell you, could I have expected this treatment from you, we had long e'er this been more familiar together.

Yes,

Yes, madam, added he, I have been a romantick journey into Northamptonshire, upon the sending of your friend Miss Maskall. I have had more plague about you, than ever man took for the wealthiest bride in christendom, and was now on my way to your sister's ; nay, had you fled to the land's end I had followed you, and would have found you too, since you resolved not to take your passage with me, and therefore it is to little purpose using vain words : for now you are in my power, I will have my will of you. Judge you, therefore, whether is best ; lovingly to meet me half way, or to be compelled, through rough usage, to the same end at last.

I replying, that whilst life remained, he should never compel me to his brutish passion ; he ran at me, with all the fury of a savage creature, to cast me along upon the earth ; but collecting all the vigour I also was mistress of, I resisted, and would have so done even to death itself ; when finding him too many for me, and fearing he would have the mastery over me, I screamed out so loud, that if any living creature was but at a reasonable distance, I was certain it must hear me ;

nor had I many times repeated it, before, to my abundant joy and satisfaction, I saw Richard (that being my servant's name) trotting towards me with no little violence.

Taking heart then, I redoubled my cries of, O Richard release me ; murder the ravisher, destroy him ; nor had I occasion for many words ; before Richard, dismounting, ran up to him, who by this time, stood ready prepared for the attack ; but having only his whip in his hand, and Richard a monstrous heavy oaken limb which he had cut since we left him, and had in good measure detained him so long behind us : the first stroke of this knock'd the captain as fairly down, as ever butcher felled an ox to the ground ; when going to repeat his blow, Hold, hold ! said I, let us not be guilty of his murder ; but secure him hand and foot, in prevention of further mischief from him, and let us conduct him to the next town, where I will commit him to the custody of a peace officer, till the law shall have pronounced his doom upon him.

Now it was, that this daring commander, who had courageously assaulted a poor defenceless woman, to force her to his

his will, exhibited to us his natural intrepidity, by falling upon his knees, first to me, then to Richard, that by the extravagance of his submission and intreaties, he might but move either of us to commiserate him; but Richard was to be guided by me, and I myself was inexorable; nor would I, after matters had been driven so far, have released him upon any account whatsoever, in justification of my own character; if I had, it might have have been retorted upon me, that had not Richard appeared as he did, I had been consenting enough to the enormity: so that insisting upon tying his hands behind him, I myself became assisting to the ligature. Mounting him then upon his own beast, and securing his legs under the belly of it; Richard having first remounted me, and then himself, he led the delinquent in triumph to the next town, where we housed and secured him; till being conducted before a magistrate, upon our oaths, he was committed to Warwick goal.

After finishing this exploit, I had a far greater inclination for returning to my sister's, than for proceeding to my friends, as I had purposed: for that my mind

would for some days be under such dis-
composure, as I chose not to appear in
before an acquaintance : so that it being
too late in the evening, and we both too
much fatigued for advancing further that
night, I the next day resumed my inclina-
tion for returning, and setting out very
early, wearried at my sister's before dinner
time.

Both she and my brother were greatly
alarmed at the sight of me again so soon :
fearing that I might have fallen from my
horse, or have met with some casualty by the
way, that had been the cause of it ; but
when I had stated my case to them, the
loss of Richard, the imminent danger I
had been in, my miraculous escape, and
the committment of my prisoner ; they
both recommended to me an hearty grati-
tude to the great disposer of all events, in
the first place ; and in the next, my sister
advised me to write forthwith to my hus-
band, and to lay the whole villainy before
him ; but this, as it would be a work of
some time, and require an head freer from
perturbation than mine then was, I de-
ferred till the next day.

C H A P. XIV.

Writes the captain's behaviour to her husband. Pravity of manners denotes a coward. Consternation about a letter. It proves from the captain to obtain his release. Mrs. Richwould opposes it. Overbiassed by her sister. Mr. Godlyman's opinion of the letter.

AS the post would be going out pretty early in the afternoon, I only took a short nap of breakfast, before I sat down to write to my husband.

How he would take it I knew not, but rested satisfied in my own breast, with having done nothing in the affair of the captain, but what became me as an honest woman and a faithful wife: so that casting all scruples aside, as no ways concerning my case, I finished the ensuing epistle.

Mrs. MARY RICHWOULD, to Mr.
GEORGE RICHWOULD.

Dearest Mr. Richwould, I
Received your indulgent letter at my
sister's, which sent me to London, for
the pleasure of conversing about you with

Mr. Boyce, so lately come from you, as the most sensible delight I could enjoy in your absence ; and I had wrote an answer to yours, which I purposed he should have returned with for you ; but I penetrated so far into the man's views at the first visit he paid me, as to deter me from intrusting him with it.

I would then have staved off his further attendance upon me, but soon found that if I meant so to do, I must remove myself both from his sight and knowledge : for that the very second time that ever he saw me, he insisted upon ushering me and a young lady of my acquaintance (who were going thither) to the play; nor was this sooner ended, than, not to mention his indecent behaviour to me in the house, he led us, unknowingly, into an house of ill fame.

My friend, being used to the town, discovered his designs, and with much ado I escaped the snare he had laid for me ; when perceiving the baseness of his views, and finding it would be impracticable to avoid him in town, I committed my letter to other hands, and left the town myself the day following ; with orders to my friend, if he should intend to follow me, to direct him

him upon a wrong scent after me. This she, by letters to my sister's, informed me of her having done, and of the extravagance of his behaviour upon the loss of me.

Finding by her, how intent he was upon seeing me, and that he vowed he would follow me to my sister's: for fear of falling into his hands, I removed myself from my sister's, and was journeying to a friends near thirty miles from thence; where I purposed to have sheltered myself, till the captain should have been compelled to leave England; but so close was his pursuit after me, that he found me upon the road, as I was on my way thither: knocked down the servant who attended me, and pursued me on horseback, till he had driven me into a lane, which being inclosed at the further end by an high gate, admitted me to pass no further.

Here he came up with me, dismounted me, and perceiving me resolute, in suffering death rather than permitting his foul embraces, he not only threatened me with, but had actually began to force me, and by his superior strength must have ruined your almost distracted wife, had not providence, in the very nick of time, sent my servant,

servant, who was by this time recovered, after me ; who led by my cries, appeared to my aid, and brought down the ravisher to the ground.

Finding his base designs thus perverted, and that he now lay at our mercy, he became all submission and intreaty, for our dismissing him ; under not only promises but vows of his persecuting me no further ; but having him now at my mercy, who had so lately denied it to my supplications, I determined to make an example of him ; and for that purpose, my servant and I, having bound him upon his horse, we conducted him to the next village, where, presenting ourselves before a magistrate, in evidence of his criminal behaviour, we procured his commitment to the county jail.

I thought proper to give my dear Mr. Richwould the earliest notice of this treacherous behaviour of one in whom he confided ; and to assure you, that having no occasion for it, I have not received one peany of money from him.

Whether your affairs may suffer or not by the confinement of this debauched traitor, I am not able to determine ; but I hear, that as it will be some months to the

the assizes, his fate cannot sooner be determined : so that though he escapes with life, it will be a tedious while first.

My brother and sister present their kindest respects to you, hoping soon to see you in Gloucestershire ; where they assure me you shall receive both a friendly and loving welcome, till we can otherwise settle ourselves, to our inclinations.

I know not by what ship this will be conveyed to you ; but I shall entrust it to a friend, with whom I lodged for the few days I was in London, who procured me a passage for the first to you, and whose care as to this I dispute not.

Give me leave my dear, again and again, to repeat my intreaties to you for your expeditious return ; that now Providence has blessed us with means, we may reunite in the enjoyment of them, never to be separated more. Committing you therefore to the same guidance that has so mercifully preserved your Molly's honour untainted, for her dearest husband, I conclude myself,

Your most dutiful,

And affectionate wife,

MARY RICHWOLD.

Having

Having inclosed the above under a cover to Miss Maskall, wherein I gave her a short history of the captain's proceedings, and committment; I desired her father would send mine, (by a safe hand) with notice of my transactions to my husband; so that I shall not trouble my reader with that, it containing little more than the above facts, with some particulars, not so proper for any other eye, as for that of my dear confidant; together with my own comments upon many material parts of the affair; and having done this, I now sat myself down contentedly, to wait for my husband, devoid of all fear of the further machinations of the captain against me; being fully persuaded in my own mind, that I should hear no more of him, till the ensuing sessions of the judges of assize.

It has long been remarkable, even to a maxim, that the noble and generous-spirited man is incapable of abuses to my sex; which should seem to denote (as it is too visible in the world, that inhuman insults are daily offered to us) that the perpetrator of our disgrace must be a mean-spirited scoundrel.

Nay, to evidence it beyond contradiction;

diction ; this, ever covets privacy and darkness ; the other, a publication of his acts in the open face of day, glorying in obtaining the very same satisfaction by an open hearted security, that his opposite skulks to conceal, and upon detection becomes ever after infamous for. Wise Solomon, so remarkable for his researches into nature, has declared it above two thousand years since, that, "The wicked fleeth when no man pursues, but the righteous is bold as a lion." Which demonstrates, that previous to a prosecution of evil, the man that can submit to it, must be first prepared for it by a natural pravity of spirit ; since the exalted and generous heart is disqualified at all events for submission to it.

Now, though the many daring acts committed by the lewd and unchaste, seem to favour of courage and audacity ; yet this can only continue with them, whilst the superiority of power remains in their hands : for let them but once be overcome, they are humble as spaniels, plead for pardon ; and, to merit it, and save themselves, stick not to accuse and condemn their very accomplices. Look then upon the man of an upright conduct ;

conduct ; should any thing be imputed to him that his soul abhors, how far is he from condescending, for fear of punishment, to a base servility ? No, firm as a rock of adamant, he braves the danger ; and, falling in his integrity, embraces even death itself, as a passage only to the reward of his constancy.

Scarce three weeks had slipt away, before Boyce (having wrote to his employers at London, to inform them of his confinement, and to intreat them, if possible, to procure his liberty ; and they by their answers insisting, that if he could not find means of obtaining it himself, it would be out of their powers ; and that if it was but for an assault, as, he had informed them, they hoped he would find no great difficulty, upon making a compensation to the prosecutor) made his application to me, by a letter from his prison ; which letter, had I been previously acquainted with his hand, I believe I should much rather have committed to the flames than have opened ; but being ignorant of it, and it being delivered to me in the parlour, before my brother and sister, I unclosed it in their presence.

My sister, observing me upon the first sight

fight of it, after reading a few words, to blush extravagantly, and to seem under no little consternation, she watched me the more narrowly ; till having scarce exceeded six lines of it, I was hardly able to draw my breath ; but fetching a sigh at the same time, my hand, with the letter in it, fell flat down to my knee.

I know not what ails me, my dear, said I to my sister ; but I never felt such an oppression upon my spirits in my life before.—Surely ! this letter can never be designed for me.—I know not from whom it can come.—I never saw the hand in my life-time before.

Look at the name subscribed, said she ; that will soon inform you who its author is.

I replied, that I had at first cast my eye to the bottom ; but having proceeded with a few lines of its contents, I had not strength left me to turn it over, for my further satisfaction.

Prithee ! said she, let me see it, we'll soon let you know who wrote it. Then snatching it hastily from my hand, and inspecting the reverse of the leaf ; pshaw ! cried she, deject yourself no further for this, it's your old friend the captain's letter ;

ter; and if you are not conscious of its containing any material privacies, with your leave I will run it over to my husband and you.

I desired she would, if it proved worth her trouble; but that if it was wholly stuffed with such seasoning as it began with, I questioned whether she would think it was; upon which she began.

Mr. PERRY BOYCE, to Mrs.
MARY RICHWOLD.

Divine Lady!

O! who can behold such excellence, but must admire; but must revere you! alas! Why am I the most miserable of all men, for bowing down before your seraphick charms, to which the mightiest monarch on earth, at sight, must pay his homage? If it can be criminal to adore perfection itself, I own, I am guilty: if not, extend the heavenly rays of your all-commanding clemency to a wretch, tho' admitted to be inferior to your love, yet not beneath your charity.

"Thus far I had read myself; but now follows what my sister read to me."

May I, thou celestial inhabitant (whilst still in the similitude of human flesh, you

con-

condescend to reside amongst men, a most unmeet companion for its tinsel'd monarchs, and only suited to the angelick choir) be permitted, at your foot-stool, to issue forth the breathings of my soul to you, for pardon of all my past aspirings to your superior preheminence? May I but be admitted to your presence, that the sincere repentance of my wounded heart, for my past presumption, may be made manifest to you? I will not then despair of forgiveness from those soft lips, whose gentle nature cannot admit of harshness.

Can it be iniquitous, to have extravagantly doated upon the only faultless piece of nature's framing? Surely, not! assumingness, it may be called in the worm, I admit, to crave shelter in the human bosom; but, when from no other motive than in admiration of its worth, it may, nay surely, ought to be remissable, by tender hearts, framed not for rancour, but of love compounded.

Dear madam! were my hand the sole engine formed for perpetual motion, and my pen an inexhaustable fountain of ink; the one would sooner cease to flow, and the other with fatigue stand still, than I could have enumerated a tythe of the thrice

thrice eminent natural gifts of the sublime Mrs. Richwould ; so that perceiving the task to be endless, let me beg you to supply the rest, from all that ever has and can be ascribed to our race, personally ; together with whatever more transcending, may be fancied in the ideal world ; O ! believe them all to be, now concentrated in my heart, as but a partial expression of your endowments.

Madam ! you know I am at this present doubly your prisoner, body and mind ; I therefore hereby sue to you for a gracious discharge from my bodily du-rance, or I must be inevitably ruined.

My freighters have given me but ten days time to appear in at London, to take upon me the command of my ship ; within which, if I am not on board, they will ship my cargo on another bottom ; and my owners threaten, rather than this mischief shall befall them, to place my authority in other hands. Now, these conditions are such, as will be impossible for me to comply with, but through your pardon of my offence, and application to the magistrate who committed me, for my liberty.

Consider, dear lady, what I have already

ready suffered ! consider what I still must suffer in this hell upon earth, till the approach of the ensuing assizes ! consider my loss of my ship, which must prove my utter undoing ! consider again my youth ; and consider the intemperate rage of a passion like mine, and at my years too ! consider lastly also, madam, how dangerous it must be to my sex, to be cast upon such transporting charms, as ought not to have been publickly exhibited ; and then tell me, what man, alike admiring, could have acted otherwise than I did.

I confess, dear lady, I had hopes of success ; but finding you impregnable to all criminal applications, believe me, though I have regretted my loss, I esteem your virtue, far beyond whatever I have hitherto held praise-worthy in you ; and rather than surprize you again to the injuring of it, would I spend the last drop of my blood in its protection.

Let me beseech you, therefore, to apply for my liberty, since I am informed it will be granted for asking ; and since thereby you may save from utter destruction him, who tenders your life more dear to him than his own, and who will
beg

beg forgiveness in the manner you shall appoint, and never offend you more.

As for the injury I did your servant, one word from you will prevail with him for his consent; who shall be amply recompensed for his suffering, by dear good lady,

Your most submissive, and

Obedient, humble servant,

PERRY BOYCE.

No sooner had my sister concluded, than What? said I, does the rascal presume me so fond of my own person, that a few sugar'd words will draw me to his lure? no, no, he mistakes his woman, I'll promise him.

Since he has brought himself into the scrape, added I, e'en let the law pass upon him; I have nothing to do with him now. He may thank himself for his ruin, not me, added I, who am but puishing according to his deserts.

I wonder, added I, that he offered not me a reward too, for the trouble I have sustained on his account, and for the hor-

ror

ror he brought over me by his practices! but let Richard act as he pleases, he shall never buy me off from punishing him. He'll be but rightly served if he loses his ship, and his whole credit for future employment: for the knave that can behave as he has done, is not a person fit to be trusted.

I know not well what to say to the affair, replied my sister: undoubtedly, the man ought to suffer; but yet, methinks, it would be an hard case too, to throw him out of his bread entirely: for my part, as the consequence proved not so fatal as it might have done, I should not carry my resentment to an extremity.

'Why, What?' said I, in some commotion, would you have me endeavour to curry favour with him, and by running at his request, give him room to suspect I am sorry for what I have done? If I have any guess, added I, at what he might reasonably think of me, in such case; it will be, that I would gladly give him a second opportunity for his villainy.

I don't say I would run, as you call it, replied my sister; but yet methods might be contrived, whereby, though you was to release him, you might tie him up

against future attempts ; as suppose was to give you security for his quiet England, forthwith, upon his entrance, without tarrying in it twenty hours ; or some other measure that might confine him to, which would you of all further dread from him, as if he was even to be executed ; and an hard case, no doubt, to consider, for one fault, a man should be too ruined.

Never endeavour to palliate the sister, said I, for it will not bear it. No, let him lie, and take his trial ; hardships of a prison will probably red his lewdness, and teach him, that woe are not designed for his sport and pastime. If he don't suffer heartily, he'll recommend his manners. What is your opinion in the affair, brother ? said I.

Child ! said he, my opinion is, that crime can be too gross for forgiveness, the penitent sinner. We pray to be given, as we forgive ; therefore, I expect it upon other terms. Now, not, that the crime affects ourselves, we should the more obstinately hold from pardon ; but for that it is a defiance of our Maker, and is prejudicial to the community.

It is a selfish view that we punish with, when only self is the motive of it : for, should I excuse a man that crime against me, which I leave him at liberty, the next minute, to commit against another ? punishment is not rightly inflicted, when personal revenge is the promoter of it ; it when it is performed, in order to the stiffening men's morals for the future, by obliging them to consideration from the part of it ; these ends obtained, the design of punishment ceasing, the criminal ought to be discharged.

Now I don't at all collect from my ear's reading of that letter, that the aggressor in this case, is so sorry or penitent for his offence intended, or mentally perpetrated, as he is for his confinement for : for had that been the case, he would have laid the main stress of his argument on his crime, the odiousness of it, and the detestation he holds it in ; and have made use of your remission here, but as reparatory to his obtaining of it at an gher tribunal.

Nay, added he, it does not even appear to me, that he has cast off those pestilent desires that first engaged him in the enormity : for that he still paints out your

charms in such lively colours, as none the most passionate of lovers could have collected ; and further, his sentiments are as quick and poignant, as if you remain still the mistress of his heart ; which little indicates the subjection of his passion, and that finding it criminal, he abhors it. This he ought to have done, and has shewn that a thorough compunction of his error, had first wrought a conviction in his mind ; instead of rhodomontade upon the seraphick being he calls you. This would have lowered you in his sentiments, to a mere woman, and he would have treated you in his letter according to where, remark it but, through the want of it, every demonstration of a still supposititious admirer, will peep through all the glosses he puts upon the negative.

My sister, who was ever an advocate for lenity, replied, that she must beg pardon for dissenting from him, in some measure, where she judged him to have strained the point too far : for that according to her best observation upon it, at first reading, the poor man had aimed, by all these fine things he has ascribed to me, at establishing my favourable opinion of him, before he came

spread out his plea before me : this might not proceed so much from love as policy, she said ; but few women being capable of thinking contemptuously of him, who marks out such excellencies in them, as are rarely discovered, elsewhere, in the whole sex. Self love, she said, would, involuntarily encourage their favour for such an one ; which, once obtained, what else, from without herself, might not follow in consequence of it.

As to his shewing some glimpses of a still subsisting regard, for one whom he had erroneously admitted to such a share of his heart ; these could not be so suddenly relinquished, she said, as to leave traces behind them ; and truly ! had y so seemed to have been, she should ve taken it merely for the effect of po---y and artifice ; but what above all pointed out to her the sincerity of his re-mation was, the admiration he expressed for her virtue : for, as the last words of a man are frequently applied to the explanation of former dubious sentences, so these, coming near to the conclusion of his letter, ought, she said, to bear a peculiар weight ; and therefore she hoped I would reconsider my hard sentence ; and

by mitigating the rigour of its punishment, in some means, not only for freedom from his future importunities, but for letting him enjoy that liberty, in which he could not prosecute even a lawful calling.

Here my brother joined with her in insisting, that what he had before said was not with intent to persuade me to prolong his confinement; but only to oblige him to more explicitness, in the reality of his conversion.

Then both desiring me to consider, partially, what advice I should most probably give to another person, under similar circumstances with myself, and to speak accordingly; they added, that they would no further, at present, disturb me in their opinions:

C H A P. XV.

The difficulty of avoiding partiality in one's own concerns. Answers the captain's letter. Favours his discharge. Articles proposed. Captain's reply. She applies for his release. Fears a surprize. Affected by the captain's character of her. Recalls her last letter. Penitential letter from the captain.

AFTER I had retreated from my brother and sister, I first reperused the captain's letter, and then recapitulated all that had passed between my brother, sister, and myself; but what stuck closest to my mind were, some of my brother's last words; which seemingly carried great weight with them; I revised these over and over, till I was convinced, that whatever I should, in a similar case, have advised another to, would and ought to be the leading step for me to proceed by.

I at first had an insuperable difficulty, as I suspected, to struggle with; which was, my disengaging myself from myself: for that, whenever I strove to apply the

case to another, some interest, peculiarly my own, would intervene, to create a partiality in my sentiments ; till at length, having disintangled myself from this perplexity, I looked upon the affair as my sister's, and then began to apply her arguments to herself, in my shoes ; when, after a very little consideration of her having received no real injury, I could not forbear to signify, as to her, that the interposition of providence to her escape, might have been misapplied by her, as directed only to her safety : for, Why not, said I, as well in prevention of the captain's crime, and with an eye to preserving him from the lash of it ? and if this should be the case, would it become her, said I, to punish the intent so grievously, when mercy to them both had been so extensive, as to divert it from producing its effect.

Here I stayed for some time, as for an answer from her, which at length I returned to myself ; that as my suffering had been wholly set aside, by him in whose power I lay ; so ought I to mitigate at least, if not absolutely discharge, the sufferings of the captain, who was then in my power ; this I was soon convinced of, and my inclination

dation then tending to it, could I but be assured of no further molestation from him ; I soon informed my brother and sister of my resolution, who advised me to send him a reviving answer ; and that it might be dispatched in the most expeditious manner, my brother ordered a servant and horse to be ready, against I had prepared it, to convey it forthwith to him.

Mrs. MARY RICHWOLD, to
Mr. PERRY BOYCE.

I Received a letter, signed Perry Boyce, so full of fulsome flattery, that had not nature inclined me to benevolence, to the most infamous of my species, I should not, for any merit either in the epistle or its author, have looked upon it as an other than an artifice, to decoy a fool into your enlargement ; but though, from a forgiving principle, I oppose not your liberty, now you have somewhat smarted for your impudence and barbarity ; yet I mean not to consent to your discharge, but upon terms of my own proposing ; which are these :

First, That you leave this country, and twenty miles round it, within six hours from your enlargement.

Secondly, That you betake yourself to your ship, in a week from your discharge.

Thirdly, That you quit the British dominions forthwith.

Fourthly, That you give me a thousand pounds security for the performance of these articles.

Fifthly, That you deny not the minutest article of those real facts to my husband, that I have already informed him of.

And Lastly, That you, upon no pretence whatsoever, at any future period, without my express leave first obtained, offer at coming into my company, or ever offer to speak to me, if casually meeting me; but that in any such case you will avoid me.

Upon proper security given for your good behaviour, and a perfect conformity

to the above articles, and upon no other condition whatsoever, will I free you; whenever you are prepared for their performance, application shall be made for that purpose, by

MARY RICHWOULD.

P. S. I have nothing to do with Richard's prosecution, nor will I interfere in it.

So soon as we had concluded upon the above to be a proper answer, my brother called the servant to carry it; when I finding Richard not to be the bearer, I objected at the person, and desired it might be sent by Richard: for that, as I had denied to influence Richard myself, if Richard was not present, to be biassed by the captain's personal arguments, all that I should do would be ineffectual: so that my brother becoming of my mind, I called Richard, told him the design of his journey; that I should consent to the prisoner's release, and left him to his option, for proceeding as he should see fit.

I could not expect his return till the next night, at soonest; so that I became not over hasty in my preparations; for applying myself to the magistrate, in case

my proposals should be complied with ; but my sister intreating me, to be ready to set out upon the first notice, assured me, that, in her opinion, nothing could require more expedition, than in the case where another was to be benefited by our act : for, added she, the benefit that is not delayed, is even twice granted ; whereas the benefit that lingers, is scarce worthy of thanks, when performed.

Nothing can be more easy than to start proposals, than which nothing is more difficult to execute ; as appeared by the following letter, which, upon Richard's return, he delivered to me from the captain.

Mr. P E R R Y B O Y C E, to Mrs.
M A R Y R I C H W O U L D.

Madam,

YO U R condescension to my request, though upon any conditions whatever, is a favour I had little room to have expected ; but though I would gladly accord to every thing within the extent of my power ; yet there are some demands of yours, which were you to insist upon,

I must rather silently submit to my present fate, than trouble you any further about : I mean, that wherein you desire security for my repairing on board my ship in a week ; and that, requiring me to quit the British dominions forthwith ; for these, madam, are out of the power of man to perform, absolutely : as in case of sickness, broken limbs by the way, and such cases, as a man would never willingly contribute to of himself ; nor indeed, is it a matter readily compassed, for a man without any settlement in England, to prevail with any person of reputation, to become bound for performance of the articles of him, who has no obligation to appear, to be called, to account for his breach of them.

All that man, therefore, of himself can do, I am willing to do ; that is, I will solemnly protest, and if you require it, swear it too, that I will minutely perform, without the least infringing upon them, the articles that you have proposed ; and will bind myself in any penalty for their conservation : but your insisting upon harder terms, will amount to a positive refusal, as they will be impossible for me to comply with.

Depart,

Depart then, good madam, from whence
can never redound to my discharge from
this wretched place; and let not your
commands extend beyond my power; be
they what else they will, they shall be ac-
complished.

I have only to add, madam, how much
I desire to be esteemed by you,

As the most sincere,

Penitent, and obedient,

PERRY BOTES

Having perused the above letter, I
called in Richard, to know what had
passed between him and the captain; to
which he replied, that having read my
letter, the gentleman asked him how he
did, and hoped he had received no great
injury from the blow he had given him.
He replied, he said, that though it had
for some time been painful to him, it was
then no ways so; but that he was poor
well again.

The gentleman then, he said, asked
him, Whether he would have such another
blow for ten guineas? to which he an-
swered,

fwered, that he would, was he but sure of no worse consequences from it ; upon which, he said, the gentleman putting his hand in his pocket, and drawing money from thence, told out ten guineas, asking him, Whether he should think himself well paid for his late injury by them ? This having acknowledged, he said, he gave him them, desiring, that when I came to release him, he would also contribute his part to it ; which Richard assured him he would.

That then, having inquired into my health, and wrote me the answer he had given me, the gentleman dismissed him, desiring him to be as expeditious as possible, in his return with it, to me ; and that he would represent the misery of his case to me. This he then did, in such affecting terms, that had he even denied his own sanction to my articles, I could not have imprisoned him longer.

I set forwards the next morning to the magistrate, and in the evening waited upon him ; where describing the damage it would be to the prisoner, should he longer remain under his confinement ; and that though his attempt upon me had been so heinous, I had been induced to

pass it over, rather than to draw absolute destruction upon him ; I therefore begged he would be so good as to procure his discharge, upon his making oath, to the performance of such articles as I then exhibited to him.

I was afraid I should have found this a more difficult affair than I had expected : the justice alledging, his want of power to serve me, till he should be discharged by law ; but I seeming to urge it so vehemently, from the damage it would prove to the poor man's circumstances ; he at length replied, that he would employ his best endeavours to serve him ; which, as he had a great interest in the goaler, might possibly be compassed : and that he would write to him the next day for that purpose. Upon this I took leave of him, with full intent to return the next morning to my sister's ; but fearing any thing further might be wanting on my part or Richard's, I could not leave the town, till I should be ascertained how matters would go with him.

This kept me till the third day, when the messenger returning with an account of the business being perfected, I was going to take horse home again ; still considering

figuring that I might not impossibly fall into his way, should we be both upon the road at the same time, which at all events I would avoid ; I deferred my journey till the following day. Our reach into things is so short, that we can be sure of nothing till it happens : for thinking by my tarry to avoid the captain, I even fell into his arms, as I may say : for the justice having ordered him over, unknown to me, in order to take his affidavit ; as I was amusing myself at a one pair of stairs window at my inn, who should come galloping into the yard, but the captain, and one of the prison-keepers attending him.

My heart, immediately upon seeing him, and knowing that, not to be his way to London, misgave me, that my compassion toward him had been misinterpreted by him, into relenting for his committment ; and that he had now followed me, in hopes of finding me compliant to his desires : so that I began to repent me heartily of my lenity to him, and wished I had at first taken my own course, and had suffered him to remain till the assizes ; but whilst I was tormenting myself under these suspicions, he, and the other man his companion (for I knew

not

not then that he belonged to the prison,) alighting from their horses, and delivering them to the hostler, (as I beheld, from a back window in the same room) moved forwards towards the house; when the captain turning to go into the street, the other man called to him to stay; hold a little, said he, let us drink first.

This I plainly heard, and expected that their visit to my apartment would have been no longer deferred, than till they had drank their liquor; but I soon changed my opinion upon the captain's reply, which was, that he would not for the world stay a moment; he had engaged not to be found within twenty miles of Warwick, after six hours from his leaving it; nor had he more time in hand, than would fairly serve for his removal to that distance.

They then leaving the inn together, were not absent for more than half an hour before they both returned to the yard again, where the captain, ordering his horse out, paid for him, and also presenting his companion with some money, but how much I could not discover; mounted, and went off upon the spur, leaving the other behind him.

I chose not to be seen myself in the affair, but had a strong inclination, for hearing how the captain's matters had been ordered, and not only how he had behaved thereupon, but what were his sentiments of his prosecutors? for that there are few aggressors, but upon a pardon gained from their prosecutors, think all that they have previously suffered an imposition upon them.

I ordered Richard therefore up to me, and sent him to drink with the captain's companion, and to fall, as by accident, into discourse about the gentleman who had left him in such a violent hurry, and to fish out whatever he could from him; but more especially what character he might have given of his prosecutors.

Richard took his cue, and executed my orders to a nicety; for he brought me word some time afterwards, that the fellow assured him, no man ever praised a lady more, than the captain had done her who had confined him; he said, that had it been almost any other woman upon earth, that he had offered such a violence to, he should have despaired of the least mercy from her; but that there was nothing but might be hoped from his prosecutrix, that was

was humane and amiable ; and vowed that if ever it could fall in his way to be of the least service to her, though at the expence of his life, he would perform it ; adding, that she having enjoined him some things that she required the strict performance of, he was determined scrupulously to execute them, though ever so much to his own prejudice.

This report of the man I had so dreaded, wrought so upon my intellects, that I was heartily sorry I had not seen him before he went off, to have taken my final leave of him ; and fair would I have instantly recalled my last letter to my husband, concerning that gentleman's behaviour to me, but resolved to write to Miss Mafkall about it, so soon as ever I should get home ; in short, the very man, who had so long been a terror to me, was now almost foremost in my esteem.

I made all the haste possible home the next day, when my sister was so surprized, at my speaking so amiably of the captain, that she knew not what she had best to ascribe it to ; but when she found me determined to write, for stopping my letter to my husband, she was in pain, left through

through her persuasions for the captain's release, I had proceeded to greater familiarities with him than were consistent with my reputation ; and so she as good as told me ; but not to suffer under such an imputation, I postponed my writing to mis, till I had fully stated the case to her, and satisfied her, that though I had accidentally seen the captain, he had not seen me, or known that I was within many miles of him ; but that my present good opinion of him arose, only from the report of his sentiments, concerning the generous act I had done for him.

My sister, by all means, persuaded me to lay aside all thoughts of recalling my letter : for that somehow or other, the transaction might come to my husband's ears, and then it might create a jealousy in him, that so heinous an act having been attempted, it should by me be secreted from his knowledge.

I replied, that the man who knew nothing, could have no cause for jealousy ; but he that should hear from writing, only bare generals and sketches of things ; if every point was not cleared up to his understanding, wherever he found a difficulty, he would find a doubt too ; which once

once being harboured in the mind, half a word on the other side the question would turn him ; and the story intended to the condemnation of another, might revert upon one's self, at last ; especially where one party was present to make out his own story, from his own packed circumstances, and the other was not ready to contradict it : so that, at all events, I said I would write to miss about it. My letter to her was in these words :

Mrs. MARY RICHWOLD, to Miss
JENNY MASKALL.

Dear Miss,

I Sent you a letter, with desire, that your papa would, by some safe captain, get it conveyed to my husband. I have now contrary reasons, for recalling it, if it is not gone.

You will highly oblige me, if your papa will inquire, if the captain who may have it, is already sailed, and out of England ; if not, that he will, at any rate, without consulting expence, recover it, and transmit it to me.

I have no more time at present, than just to signify how much I am obliged to you

you for all past favours, and how much more so shall I be, if you can procure or return what I now write for, to your

'Most faithful friend,

And servant,

MARY RICHWOULD.

About a week after I was come home, I received the following letter from the captain.

Mr. PERRY BOYCE, to Mrs.
MARY RICHWOULD.

Madam,

NEVER had any specifick a more powerful or effectual operation, than the dose you lately administered to my frantick imagination. Its force I have found perfectly alterative, to the comfort of my whole composition.

I write this (within the time prescribed me for my appearance in that city) from London; and as a perfectly restor'd patient, return you my most sincere acknowledgements for my cure.

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I have only, now, to intreat you to forgive my past follies ; to secret them from my dear friend, Mr. Richwould ; to believe me a new man ; and, having taken to myself all that shame, most justly due to my past behaviour, to believe I never more your lover, but

Madam,

Your most respectful, and

Obedient servant,

PERRY BOYCE.

CHA

C H A P. XVI.

General review of the captain's affair.

Poible of prosecutors. Lenity recommended. Miss Maskall's letter. Of mothers suckling their own children. Letter from Mr. Richwould to his wife. Her joy at the receipt of it. Good acts bring their own reward. Search for a country seat.

NO sooner had I read the captain's letter, than pleased at his manner of expressing himself, I carried it to my sister, who was equally delighted at it with myself.

You see, child, said she, how much more prevailing gentle and humane measures are, for establishing one's views and transactions upon an agreeable footing, with such as may chance to offend us, than rough and savage treatment. This gentleman injured you, you justly resented it; he submitted, and sued for pardon, and you, like a worthy christian woman, touched more with his misfortune, than sensible of your own wrong, have forgiven and released him; where-

by you have engaged him to you, as no longer an ensnarer, upon the watch for advantage over you; but as a friend, under obligation for ever to serve you, to the utmost of his power; and you part in charity for each other.

The general fault that I have remarked amongst men is, added she, the want of forgiveness to each other. A poor fellow shall take a trifle from me, or my dwelling, which can no ways be estimated as a tythe of the wrong done to you. I prosecute him; and, judging according to the customary usage in such cases, I count no man an equal villain with him whom I have taken in hand to chastise. I absolutely decline his release, intent upon his prosecution to the extremity of the law; and when I am drawn before the court to appear against him, as if it was driven to the necessity of one of us perishing; so far am I from representing his case to his tryers, under favourable or even equitable circumstances, that I strain every point, and urge every objection against him, to the severest height; nay, rather than the criminal shall escape, I will even invent matter, and add unacted circumstances, inductive of his condemnation;

nation ; nor will I appear more zealous, for the recovery of my estate unjustly detained from me, than I will, anxious for the destruction of a fellow creature, who has injured me of ten pence ; merely for the sake of victory, over the culprit whom I appear against.

I may be thought by you, sister, said she, to have extravagated, in urging this matter so far ; but I will appeal to all unprejudiced auditors of such things, whether what I have above stated, is not the general fact, or as near to it as may be.

How heavenly then appears, when set in contrast with the above principles, that sublimely-minded mortal, who studies not revenge, nor would maliciously retaliate upon an aggressor ; but whose ear is ever open to his cry for favour, and his heart to the inlet of mercy ? who when brought unwillingly to accuse a delinquent, will do it with the compassion of a friend ; and as an advocate for the prisoner, will be so far from aggravating his offence, that as far as ever the truth will permit him, he will mitigate the crime, by the most mild interpretation he can put upon it, in hopes of alleviating the guilt he stands impeached for. In this case, the shame

M 2 itself,

itself, of ever after injuring so generous an evidence, from an enemy as the prisoner before took him for, he is compelled to esteem him for a friend, and to repay his goodness by every subsequent means in his power. Whereas the criminal escaping, upon the evidence of one of contrary behaviour, esteeming him an enemy, is but the more inveterate ever after, in his malice against him, and even studies, wherein he may most mischievously affect him : so that did not common justice and humanity invite a man to the side of mercy, even his own interest ought to oblige him to it.

I was so well pleased with what I had done, that I could have no peace till I had gone through stitch, and regained my letter into my own possession ; but now a whole fortnight had passed, since I wrote to Miss Maskall ; and not a word of answer had I received from her ; which made me so very uneasy, that I had almost determined for London myself, to have learnt the meaning of it ; nor had I hesitated at it many days longer, had not the post, in the mean time, brought me what I had so anxiously and daily waited for. It ran as follows :

Miss

Miss J E N N Y M A S K A L L, to Mrs.
M A R Y R I C H W O U L D.

Dear Madam,

Y O U are not wholly unacquainted with my dear father's temper ; for, as no man will take more pains, or receive more pleasure from the service of his friend, than himself ; so no man is more touchy or peevish, where any thing like sickleness appears, in any case under his hands.

Upon my first producing your last to him, he had taken pains enough to apprise himself of some sure hand, to safely deliver your letter, he said ; and should he now go to reclaim it again ? not he truly ! besides, he said, the captain might be half through his voyage for ought that he knew, and therefore he would not stir after it.

You may be assured, dear madam, that no one thing in my power, that might be urged in pursuance of your pleasure, was omitted by me, to induce him to the undertaking : but all, as I verily believed, would prove without effect ; when grieved at my heart, that I should not be able to answer your expectations, I fell to crying

through vexation; nor could I, upon any account, have restrained from it.

This, my father seeing, he could not permit; but, give me the letter, said he, and I'll see what is to be done about the other: since it may be necessary to produce this countermand, in the same hand, with that I delivered, that it may be known it is Mrs. Richwould's own request, and not any curiosity of mine that demands it.

I thanking him for the favour he had shewn to me, kissed him, and told him how delighted I was, at his yielding thus to my tears, which, for no other's sake he would have undertaken; whereupon, he went now as cheerfully about it, as if no reluctance had been before shewn by him.

At dinner time, returning, he told me that he had made inquiry after the captain, and found he had sailed a full week before, but was believed not to be out of the Downs yet.

I knew nothing of the Downs, not I; but by his way of expressing himself, judging it not to be a vast way off, I begg'd he would send after the ship, which he replied, he had been thinking of as he came home, and had ordered a man to come to him, whom he purposed to be the messenger.

Well,

Well, he sent to the coast of Sussex ; but upon the return of our courier in two days, he brought us news of the ship's sailing the day before for Waterford in Ireland.

My father, who never stops when once he has entered upon the course, till he attains the goal ; no sooner heard this, than it being post day, vowed he would write to a correspondent in Ireland, to go meet the ship at Waterford, to try what he can still do towards your gratification.

Here the thing rests, and so soon as we have a return from Ireland, I hope, with good effect, I shall again have the pleasure of subscribing my self,

Dear madam, I do much oblige you
to give me a copy of your letter to Mr.
B. and will do the same to Mr. B. as
soon as I receive it. Your most obedient servant,
JANE MASKALL.

I had the satisfaction from the above letter, to see that my affair was not neglected ; but that it would ever be compassed, I made some doubt ; till near a fortnight afterwards, I received my husband's, inclosed in one from Miss ; but as

M 4 her's

her's was only to inform me how glad she was, that her endeavours for my service had succeeded, and what her father's charges had been, which I might return when and how I pleased ; I shall not here trouble my reader with it.

My heart being now perfectly at rest, I had nothing to crave, but the return of my dear husband : which, as it could not happen yet for some time, I deferred all anxiety about it, till his over tedious delay might call me to the exercise of it.

My sister had brought my brother a son, to which I stood godmother, and as beautiful a baby it was as ever saw the light.

My brother and I had looked out in the neighbourhood for a nurse, he having been desirous that the child should be brought up by hand ; having, in houses where he had been, seen so much of the father's disturbance, from the mother's sucking, as had made him sick of the thoughts of it, now it was come to his own turn ; but my sister, who had ever pleaded against children's being nursed from under the mother's eye, was but so much the more averse from it, now she had one of her own.

She

She insisted, that no nutriment could be so salutary to her child, as that it had so long subsisted upon ; and that being congenial with it, she would never put it to the venture, whether other food might not equally answer the purpose : for that, in so tender creatures, as new-born babies, it might be too late to rectify the error, so soon as it was discovered.

She was sure she could not condemn herself for following the appointment of nature, she said, let the child prosper or not ; for that she should submit to providence : but should she step out of the preordained course of nature, and a failure should succeed to it, she should conceive herself so grossly culpable, as never to forgive her presumption.

Why was all that apparatus in woman formed; for the convenience and nourishment of the child, she said, if it was not designed for its particular use by the author of nature ? and if so, it was most convincing to her, that no means of man's devising, could be so perfect, or adapted to the use of the child ; nor could she imagine, but the mother must have her share of interest in it too, since providence had made nothing in vain.

Why was that flask, the recipient of the milk, made capable of containing a due quantity, and kept constantly replenished as it was drawn forth? Why was the neck, nipple, or mouth-piece, placed in its center, but for the convenience of the child's sucking through so soft, spungy, and pleasing a play thing to its mouth? Why were the infant's teeth not born with it, as well as its nails; but because it should not injure that? Why were the conduits all opened for the supply of the breast, at or near the birth of the child; but for its support, in readiness provided for it against it should want? and what was the substance of it, but those same juices inverted, that had first increased its bulk, and were assimilated to its very being?

So that upon all accounts, she said, she would take that care upon her cheerfully, that providence had committed to her trust, and behave to it in the very way, that, had appointed.

My sister, who had for years visited but little abroad, was now confined altogether at home; nor indeed took I half the delight in out-door work that I had done, now I had gotten my little nephew

to dandle about ; for, if possible, I was equally fond of the child, with its own mother.

In about six months time after I had dispatched my captain, I received another letter from my husband, which I shall here present my reader with.

Mr. G E O R G E R I C H W O U L D,
to Mrs. M A R Y R I C H W O U L D.

My ever dear Molly,

HAD I been told only, that it was possible for human nature to have been so capable of sublime ecstasy, as I really experienced in my own heart, upon receipt of your loving letter, I should have took it only for a flight of fancy, and what never could have been realized in our mortal state.

What ? and is then my lovely Polly in life ? in health ? in longing expectation of my return to her ? Surely I dream ! whilst I would flatter myself that I see this, under the impressions of thy charming hand, and dictated by an heart still devoted to your most affectionate husband ; but yet, every sense commanding my assent, I must

M 6 believe

believe it, and that she lives once more to fill my arms, never, as she kindly urges, to be separated from them.

My dearest girl! I am all rapture whilst I think of thee : for long had I not received your letter by captain Graves, (which I would hope my love dispatched by him, as likely to reach me sooner than by captain Boyce, by whom I wrote you) before Boyce arrived, and with such a tale of thee, whom he had seen and conversed with, he said ; as, if nothing else could have moved me from this spot, was sufficient to have confirmed an anchorett in the resolution of leaving all the world behind him, for the enjoyment of so far more superb^a treasure, in my dear Mary; much more then must it excite in me, her sole proprietor, every desire for grasping thee to my embraces.

He tells me, child, that I have the perfectest, the chasteft, the most loving wife in thee, that ever man was blessed with. He described to me your first interview ; rehearsed your questions about me, your speeches of me, and painted to me your very looks, your piercⁱng eye, your earnestly imbibing every word commendatory of me ; my wealth, my living, and my person :

person : insomuch, that at last, he added, was he but possessed of such a woman, no longer would he range the ocean's face for sordid ore, or place a single thought of happiness beyond you ; but should in you, possessing all things, relinquish every of nature's other bounties, to the wretches who could deign to stoop for them.

In short, Molly, he has so whetted my desires for possessing the bliss he has promised me ; that I am already about contracting for the sale of my plantation and effects here, all but three negroe slaves, whom I purpose to bring over with me, a mother and two sons, there scarce ever having appeared in the christian world a little family of such loving, faithful, and trusty persons, of their sort before ; at least, I may stile them so to myself, from experience : the old woman has been my trusty and careful nurse, in two most acute illnesses that I have had here ; insomuch, that I can attribute my being, solely, under providence, to her steady watchfulness over, and regard for me : nor is there either of her sons, but would interpose his own with pleasure, I am perswaded, to preserve my life : so that these I cannot leave

leave behind me, to worse treatment than they have ever been used to from me.

I highly approve my dearest Molly's reasons, for not embarking for this island. My only hope, my dear, being centered in you, I only sought your presence with me, whilst I should still be increasing my store, for the pleasure of a nobler offering to my dear wife ; but, you having prospered at home, as well as I abroad, which ever of us is moving towards the desired end first, I make no account of, so that we meet but by the speediest methods.

If it can be brought about so soon, I purpose to embark for England about February next, and shall be in England in April or May, no accident preventing. All therefore that I would engage my Folly in, for the mean time, is only to look out for some commodious dwelling for us, to enter upon about Midsummer : for though I greatly commend your prudence, in so lovingly abiding with your sister so long ; and though I purpose my first visit to you to be at her house, yet I would by no means trouble her with our company too long, after my return : but fix not upon any place too far from your sister's :

sister's : for you must know, that though I have never yet seen her, my prejudices run strongly in her favour; and I am persuaded, for thy sake, that I shall study as intimate an alliance and correspondence with her as you can.

I would send you by the shipping that brings this, some peculiarity present; but that you need it not; only give me leave, with my kind love to my brother and sister, for all favours to me in you, to beg his kind acceptance of some casks of rum, and a chest or two of fruits, and other things peculiar to this part of the world; and could I but be apprized by you, of any other things procurable here, that might also be agreeable, I would send or bring them likewise.

I have only remaining, to recommend my love to the guardianship of providence, till the same power shall deliver her into the arms of her

Most affectionate husband,

GEORGE RICHWOLD.

My sister and I, having read the above together, I grew into the highest spirits imaginable,

imaginable, upon the hope of some period being fixed to my widowhood ; and our heads were both at work, upon some seat for us to fix at ; but not being able off hand to conclude upon any thing, we agreed to take the coach, and search for ten miles round the country, for some pleasant situation, that might not be discommended by my husband.

What pleased me more than any thing, next to the speedy return of my husband, was the character that captain Boyce had given me ; now sister, said I, what might have been the case, had my letter, relative to him, ever reached my husband's hands ?

I own, said she, you had more forecast in that than I had, and I commend you greatly for being so peremptory in recalling it.

Truly ! said I ; had any one given me a thousand pounds to have let it gone to my husband, I would not have consented, if I could have avoided it : for I have since considered, that had he seen it, how could so loving a man, as he declares himself to be of me, have forbore to resent it ? Suppose, said I, that this had been the case, and he had aimed at calling Boyce to account for it ; the captain could not have refused

refused his challenge, for fear of being branded with cowardice. Suppose then, added I, that they had fought, and I had lost my husband by the bargain, which is far from an improbability ; What a fine hand had I then made of it ; And how could I ever have forgiven myself ? that because a man had offered me an injury, I must set him to kill my husband ? for it had been all my doing, if that letter had gone.

My sister concluded, with my being much in the right in what I had done, and averred, that good actions seldom failed of promoting their own reward ; but said, that neither would she lose the merit ascribable to her in the affair : for that it was she that had prevailed with me to deliver the captain, without which the above amiable character could not have been given of me.

She hoped, she said, that the captain would prove a valuable man, still ; nor doubted she, but on some future occasion, her seeing the captain, upon my husband's return, as much caressed in my family, as ever before in my husband's.

It would have been greatly pleasing to me, to have had one more opportunity of writing.

writing to my husband; for there was not that thing upon earth, in his absence, that could afford me more delight; but the hazard any letter of mine would run of meeting with him upon the island, deterred me from it: so that I forbore, contenting myself to wait with patience, and prayer for his safe arrival to me.

My sister and I had taken many a jaunt in her coach, to seek out for a commodious house for us; but for several days, could find none, that I could not raise some exception or other to; till we grew not only tired of the exercise, but in despair of answering our purpose. We had but two more points in view, for continuing our search in, and these we resolved forthwith to repair to; when if nothing was there to be found, we must throw up the chace as desperate. We made a direct drive for ten miles, without seeing a single tenement unoccupied, and were returning by another road, with as little effect; till we came within about five miles of home, when one of our horses dropping a shoe, we stopt at a blacksmith's, to have another tacked on; for him to go home with.

Whilst the servant was busied in his occupation,

cupation, my sister, calling to the master of the shop, Prithee, friend, said she, do'st know of any tolerable good country seat not been lett herabouts? Ay marry! madam, do I, said he, nor does any body else scarce know it, yet, I believe. I should be glad, said she, if you could point out to me whereabouts it lies. Why, madam, said he, it is the late Sir Thomas G---n's. Is that to be lett? said my sister. I heard, indeed, that Sir Thomas was dead; but, Lett he not a lady behind him? He did, madam, said the smith, but she is about to quit it, and it will be lett till young Sir William comes of age. My sister then saying she was not acquainted in the family, asked whereabout it lay? and how far we were then off it? O! madam, said he, by the coach way you may be near six miles from it, but we call it but two over the fields.

We concluded, that six miles further would be too long a drive for us that night: so that asking if he was known in the family; and he replying, that he did all their work; I told him, I would gratify him for his trouble, if he would step over to the lady's the next day for a certainty

tainty of his report, and our servant should call for his answer.

Madam, said he, I do all my lady's business, and am now upon work for her, which she told me was designed to be taken away with her, she being about to leave her house very speedily ; and ladies, said he, if you have any desire for taking it, I hope I shall have your custom, and will meet you there, or tell my lady, I know somebody that would rent it of her.

This we approving of, he was to make inquiry next morning, and we were to send for his answer in the afternoon ; so that now, having concluded the business of the day, we returned home, without looking out any further.

C H A P. XVII.

Hires a seat. Mrs. Richwould's employment there. Letter from her husband of his speedy return. Effects of company. Takes an adjoining farm. Improves her stock. Mr. Richwould sends for his wife to London. All arrive at Miss Maskall's. Mr. Richwould and wife's greeting after ten year's absence. Return to Gloucestershire. Becomes a farmer. Lives happily till his death. Conclusion.

FROM the smith's answer the next day, we found that the house was to be let, and on the following morning we waited upon lady G—f—n; who having been preapprised of our coming by the smith, received us very graciously; and the more so, when she had heard who my sister was, and that I was her sister, who expected my husband home from the West-Indies, and that it was designed for our own use.

Having been shewed all over it, and about the garden and paddock, we were not

not long, concluding upon fourscore pounds a year for it, to keep it in reasonable repair, and to leaye the same stock of deer upon it that we should find there.

We then inquired, how soon we might come into it; which her ladyship said must be soime few months, as she could not well leave it till towards Lady Day; now this suiting me perfectly, I agreed with her, and took it with such of the furniture as her ladyship saw fit to leave standing, in case her son, when of age, should choose to reside there; all which was to be inventoried to me: so that whenever I should enter upon the premises, I perceived nothing more would be immediately wanting, than pewter, bras, and some few kitchen utensils; unless I should have a mind to furnish some rooms, that would be dismantled by her ladyship, and which we might very well spare, as more than we should know how to occupy.

Looking now upon the seat as my own, I was frequently over there, having obtained her ladyship's permission for performing several little works and alterations that I had judged necessary, before I entred

entred upon it. This proved a fine amusement to me, and what I greatly delighted in; as it seemed to point out to me the reality of my husband's return, and kept him as constantly in my mind, as if he was actually present with me: for that about every fresh job that I undertook, I seemed to have consulted him, and fancied how agreeable it would prove to him.

Never stole time away more heavily, than the lingering hours that drew on the approach of April or May, in one of which months I hoped to be compleatly happy: nor how I should have worn them out can I say, had it not been for my employment at my new house: for no sooner had her ladyship quitted it, which was about the latter end of January, than I entered with four servants, whom I kept constantly there, and not unfrequently lay there myself: for, what with cleaning the house all over, and making various dispositions of the furniture; sowing the gardens against spring, and performing many other things preparatory to our settlement there; I had employment enough on my hands.

One peculiar comfort I received in the heightth

height of my operations, which still actuated me to my labours more chearfully; this was, that about the beginning of March I received another letter from my husband, advising me of his soon embarking for England; but as I have presented my readers with his former, so I shall lay this also before them as the last I ever received from him abroad.

Mr. GEORGE RICHWOLD,
To Mrs. MARY RICHWOLD.

Dearest Molly,

IT is with inexpressible delight, that I can now assure you of my having adjusted all my dependencies in this country; though I have not as yet collected in all that is due to me, and fear I must leave part, unrecover'd, behind me, to be returned after me, by a gentleman whom I shall intrust in the affair.

It is incredible how sums amount, when they come to be accumulated together, and every other part of a man's effects, come to be converted into cash: for now, all that I had, is either vested in cash or goods, to be brought over with,

or

or sent after me : instead of the forty thousand pounds that I had resolved to content myself with, I shall bring above fifty with me, besides no small sum that will follow me.

My departure is fixed for the first week in March, wind and weather permitting ; and I hope to be ready by that time. You will be so good as to remember a dwelling for us ; nor would I have you oversaving in the rent, so that it is but something elegant : for an indifferent being will strike a damp upon the pleasure I hope to take in it ; but be sure, let my dearest remember, to take ground enough with it : for that, having been so long used to a scarce measurable tract of my own lands about me, I shall think myself stifled in narrow limits ; nor shall I be able to forbear falling into some course of farming, by way of employment ; at least for some years ; a number of labourers about me being the joy of my life, as what I have been so long accustomed to.

O ! my love ! how I shall delight myself, when thee and I are walking about our fields, amongst our workmen and cattle ! for I will have abundance of these I am resolved,

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as horses, cows, sheep, and poultry without number ; and if these suit but thy taste too, how happily shall I dwell upon my own territories, were I assured I should never remove my feet from off them ; but these things, though grateful in speculation, must all be referred to practice.

I am quite melancholy, to think it will be impossible for me, once more, to hug a line from thee to my breast, while I could please myself with thy lovely idea from it ; but as this cannot be granted me, I must survive upon more grateful hopes, in time to be compleated, of that inconceivable pleasure your presence will administer to

My dear Molly's

Most loving and longing Husband,

GEORGE RICHWOULD.

P. S. I shall come directly to you from the ship.

Every little helps (is a saying) ; so, though this letter brought not my dear husband with it, yet it convinced me of his best endeavours, and of the inclination he

he had for my society. It brought me an account of his health, his wealth, and of the time, when I might no longer feed myself upon hopes ; but, if providence preserved him, enjoy him personally ; all which were no small support to my spirits ; but then, what I should do about land to the house I had taken, the whole that accompanied the seat being only about seven acres of orchard and gardening, besides the paddock, that might contain, as I had heard about thirty acres ; but might not be converted to any other use : so that how I should come off with my scanty pattern of land I could not say.

I was speaking of this to my gardener one day, as I stood overlooking his work, and was asking him what rates lands went at, and whether he knew of any thing that might be hired within a moderate distance of me ; when he replied, that old Gregory Wheatear being dead, he heard, that his widow would quit her farm at Michaelmas, to my lady, and that it lay at the back of my garden wall.

To my lady ? said I, What lady do you mean ? why my lady G---f---n, replied he, your landlady, madam. I asked, whether he thought she might not be in-

duced to part with it sooner than Michaelmas; but he replied, that she must take her crop off; though he doubted not, but she would be glad to sell it standing, as it would save her a great expence, about inning, threshing, and carrying to market.

This was so agreeable news to me, that I sent him away instantly, to learn whether she would part with it directly: for it had run in my head, from the moment that I had informed myself of my husband's favourite amusement, that if I could but find him employment in his own way, before he should become acquainted with the country gentlemen, and fall into their methods of drinking, hunting, and other debaucheries, I might keep him the more at home with me; as his mind would then be occupied according to his own taste: for it is observable, that a vacation from all employment is the leading step to force a man into company; till, tho' ever so disagreeable to him at first, usage renders it pleasing, and then so necessary, as that a man is ever restless elsewhere.

Now a man that keeps company, and loves it, must engage in their practices, and participate of their vices: so that, thinks

thinks I (as the first blow is half the battle) if I can but fix my husband at his first coming, to some sober employment; that strictly prosecuted, will leave him but little spare time upon his hands, I may attach him to myself, and his own home; which, once becoming delightful to him, it may be more difficult to withdraw him from thence than from bad company, when once he has gained an hankering after it.

The widow Wheatear agreeing to part with the crop, provided the purchaser would, at the same time, take all her stock, cattle, and implements of husbandry; she would sell them all together at a reasonable appraisement, the gardener told me; but, What should I do with the latter? he said, they being old, and several of little worth; nor were her cattle the top of the market, he said; but were weak, and had little feed in their bellies.

Never the worse for that, said I. How so? madam, said Mark (that being his name) because they will come the cheaper, said I.

My scheme ran so rapidly in my brain, that, in order to strike whilst the iron was hot, and not have some other interpose

for my bargain ; I ordered dame Wheat-ear to me, when I told her what my servant had reported from her, and that if she would send one neighbour, I would send another, and whatever her stock and crop should be appraised at, I would pay her down ; and that she might be at no inconvenience upon quitting her farm-house to me, at the same time, I would pay her a further sum of ten pounds.

My dame, being fully sensible what a good market she was like to bring her effects to ; for that no two men, but would favour her more against me, than against a brother farmer, upon the appraisement ; made no more words, but would appoint her appraiser to meet mine next morning, if I pleased ; she said. To his, I consenting, sent for a neighbouring farmer, who, as I was informed, bore a good character, and dispatched him upon the business at the time.

They all waited upon me the following day ; when, making no dispute upon the valuation, I paid my dame her money and the ten pounds, and had all the goods delivered to me. As to the farm-house, taking Mark for an honest fellow, I put his family into that, to look after the cattle,

cattle, and take charge of the grounds, being in all, as the widow assured me, two hundred and forty acres, for which she paid fourscore and six pounds a year.

Returning to my sister's that night, I acquainted my brother and her with what I had been transacting, together with my reasons for it. These they both highly commended ; my sister making this remark, that a very few of the first steps that a man takes in life, frequently determine his future fortune in it ; and if I could prevail, by the means I purposed, to employ my husband, who, upon his first coming over, would be as a man newly rising into life here, and keep his head from rambling, it might bid fair for an happy subsistance between us, for our whole lives afterwards.

There chancing to be large quantities of hay and straw upon the premises I had taken of the widow, these I ordered to be delivered plentifully to the cattle, both horses, cows, and sheep ; so that by the time there was any grafts for them to feed upon, they were so improved, as to be worth double what I had paid for them, and so I could have sold them at market.

I had now worn out all the month of

April, and was entring upon May; when the nearer the time drew, my heart daily beat with acuter anxieties and doubts, lest any accident should have happened to my dear husband in his passage, whilst I was hourly hoping for his safe arrival; till about the close of the month, I became haunted with such terrifying imaginations, at hearing nothing of him yet, as I could scarce have endured much longer, without the danger of turning my brain; had not I received a letter from London from him, of his own hand-writing there, which so reversed my former calamitous circumstances, that I was in more danger, from distraction with joy, than I had been for grief before; but not to withhold its contents from my reader, I shall here lay it before him.

MR. GEORGE RICHWOLD, TO
MRS. MARY RICHWOLD.

My beloved Molly,

THE nearer I approach to thy lovely person, the more piercing are my desires for ingrossing thee all to myself.

I landed here last night; but though,
for

for my whole voyage, I had fed my mind with the thoughts of taking post to thee upon my arrival, and far otherwise than by letter to have convinced thee of my return and never-dying affection ; yet, now I find myself here, I have so many valuable effects on board, that must be forthwith landed and housed ; and such a variety of employment upon my hands, that as I cannot subsist without thee, I must intreat you (though certainly it were my duty to find you first) as what I hope you will, from the necessity of the thing comply with, to set out forthwith for London to me, where you will hear of me, at the Antwerp tavern behind the Exchange.

I fear I shall be obliged to wait some weeks before my business can be dispatched, which, with thee will not seem tedious ; but the sooner I can get away the better ; and if never more to see this city, shall I never repine at it : for I purpose not to visit one of my former companions here, or even to intimate to them my return.

The sooner you can come the more grateful to

Your most affectionate husband,
GEORGE RICHWOULD,

I

I was now all impatience till I could get to London ; which my sister perceiving, my dear, said she, I cannot be prepared for going with you to-morrow, as you talk of ; but, as I presume a single day will break no squares, especially when it is past, as it soon will be ; if you will stay till the following morning, I will set out with you as early as you please ; nor dispute I but Mr. Godlyman will consent to it, as we have business there, that may as well be transacted now as at any other time.

She spoke of the loss of a day so coolly, that I could not forbear to tell her, she knew not what it was to have a husband waiting for her, whom she had not seen these ten years and more ; however, I could not but believe, that the pleasure their company would afford to my husband, (not to mention how highly it would gratify me, would compensate fully for the loss of twenty-four hours only ; and therefore, if she would promise me her's and my brother's good company for the journey, I would stay for them.

There could be little doubt of agreement between such a couple as my brother and sister ; neither of whom had ever yet opposed

opposed the other's opinion : so that my sister had only to testify her request, before it was obtained ; and now we all equally prepared for travelling.

We set forwards at the appointed time in their coach, with a set of horses, and two servants with arms on horseback. We arrived the second day in the afternoon at Mr. Maskall's ; but I was sadly fearful, lest his lodgings being pre-engaged, we should have been forced to look out farther. However, all happened to be right : for they had a first floor to spare, and a two pair of stairs backwards ; whereupon we directly entered ; but scarce could I afford myself time to sit down, before I had dispatched a porter to my husband, which I did, with only a single line, signifying my desire to see him, and where ; and then I saluted miss, and we had some conversation together.

Women, having twenty things to put away ; miss would have carried some of my sister's, and have shewn her into the room even with the dining-room ; but she declined the acceptance of it, desiring to be shewn up stairs ; for that her brother was a stranger, and ought therefore to be complimented with that room ; besides, miss,

miss, said she, my sister is to act the bride to night, and must be placed in the best bed ; nor would all that I could say to the contrary, prevent her leaving it for me.

My husband returned with the porter, and was shewn up stairs ; when such a scene as past between us, in the presence of the rest of the company, can only be conceived by persons in a similar situation ; but we both clung so together, and wept to such a degree, as my brother judging it unreasonable for us to be interrupted in company, beckoned my sister and miss to follow him out of the room : for tho' our transactions he said, were but from the effects of our mutual affection, and highly proper between ourselves, he took them for an indecency to spectators.

My husband and I had such a course of endearments to run through before we could cool sufficiently, for the admission of company ; that it was a full hour before I was at leisure to recall them into the room ; but being returned, he had enough to do, in paying and receiving compliments, between himself, my brother, and sister. Miss, whom he took for a relation, standing by, I told him who she was ; but that she was far dearer to
me

me than many relations would be, and a peculiar confident of mine ; when he saluted and complimented her too.

The gust of our love scene being abated, we now behaved together like other convertible people, till bed-time ; and the next morning arose like an old-married couple, to our several duties for the day.

Mr. Richwould made several valuable presents to my brother and sister, whilst in town ; and several to send into the country ; to which, from the description of the place I had taken for him, he hasted all in his power ; but especially for the sake of the land annexed to it, he grudged every day that he spent in town, as absenting him from it.

It was full six weeks e'er we could get into the country ; and then having sent vast cargoes of things by some waggons to our seats, and disposed of the cargo he brought over with him ; he placed most of his money in the funds ; after which we set out in my brother's coach for his seat in Gloucestershire, where he purposed to have spent some time ; but being now desirous of reaching his own home, and having had the benefit of my brother and sister's company so long in town already, we

we stayed but three days with them, and then moved off to our own habitation.

Mr. Richwould was so taken with the place, that he vowed he could pass his whole life upon it; but more especially the land and cattle were most engaging to him; then hay harvest setting in, by the time that we were well settled there, and this being soon succeeded by the corn, he was so occupied till past Michaelmas, that he never once stirred out of his own territories for the whole time, save to church, which he constantly attended, and to return some few visits made us upon our arrival in that country.

The winter was taken up in preparations for the next year's crops; when he had innumerable contrivances in his head for the improvement of his lands, and other affairs relative to his farming; insomuch, that not visiting at all at that season, his neighbours were the more sparing of their company to him, the ensuing season: so that Mr. Richwould became remarkable, in a little time, for a recluse person, and was but little regarded by the wealthiest of his neighbours, tho' this he mattered not, so that he stood but in the good graces of the poor, to whom he

he was exceedingly charitable ; not a family round us being in real want, who received not relief from our bounty.

The sweet disposition Mr. Richwould was of, occasioned my never contradicting him, which so elevated me in his esteem, that he not only contrived every method for obliging me, but grew fond of me, even to doting upon me.

We spent a whole fortnight with my brother's family, and they with us, both every summer, and every winter, for many years ; till I was become the mother of six children, and my sister of eleven ; but after about fourteen years cohabitation together, Mr. Richwould taking a violent cold, it turned to a fever, which carried him off, and left me a widow, with near sixty thousand pounds. He had, by his will, bequeathed all to my disposal, not making the least question, as he therein declared, but I should as prudently dispose it to his children, as he could, was he to survive me ; for that having found me a wife according to his own heart, he would not apply his substance otherwise than to myself, lest I might afterwards suffer some inconveniences from it.

Though I at first undertook this work,
for

for the discovery of my sister's character, I could not close it without sketching out such an husband in Mr. Richwould, as falls to but the lot of few ladies.

I am now in my forty-seventh year, living fully content, in my having once been possessed of so valuable a man ; nor would I make a second experiment for the universe.

F I N I S.



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